PRESENTED TO THE

ACTOR'S FUND,

—BY—

GABRIEL HARRISON,

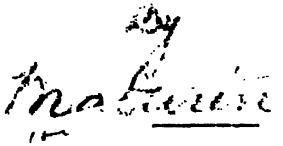
1888.

BROOKLYN

THE ALBIGENSES,

A ROMANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BERTRAM," A TRAGEDY:
"WOMAN; OR, POUR ET CONTRE," &c.



Sir, betake thee to thy faith,
For seventeen poniards are at thy bosom.
SHAKSPEARE'S *All's Well that Ends Well.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED BY BLISS AND WHITE, HENRY M'GRARY, J. F. SIBELL,
AND WILDER AND CAMPBELL.

1824.

THE ALBIGENSES.

CHAPTER I.

If but one poor straw ye burn,
Or do our towers so much molest
To scare a swallow from his nest,
St. Mary, but we'll light a brand,
Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland.
SIR WALTER SCOTT.

MEANWHILE the bishop had gained the upper gate of his castle, and the warders, starting from their seats of stone, hollowed in its walls, held torches while the port-cullis was raised; and many attendants, ecclesiastical and military, crowded the arched way behind, their torches flinging an umbered light on its narrow entrance of grey stone and its ribbed arches. In the front, and in strong contrast to the smoky glare of the torches, and the dark masses on which it fell, stood the bishop of Toulouse, magnificently arrayed as just risen from a banquet; his crosier-bearer on one side, and on the other his standard-bearer, displaying the broad banner, embroidered with the motto of the crusaders in wrought gold, *Dieu et l'Eglise*. The bishop's castle was fortified with unusual strength; from the gate which opened on the drawbridge, a flight of stone steps, cut in the solid rock, led to a second and higher gate, which opened on the court-yard, whose level was far above that of the moat; each of these gates was defended by a strong portcullis, and the first by a strong barbican and barriers beside. A band of knights appeared at the same moment, riding close to the barbican, having a stout train of men-at-arms

in their rear, and seeming to demand parley. "Who and what are ye?" said the bishop. "Knights as ye seem by your guise, though not by your courtesy, who ride in hostile wise so near the holy and peaceful habitation of a churchman." At these words a herald was about to apply his bannered trumpet to his mouth, when the foremost knight struck down his arm, and, pricking forward, reined up his steed in the van; and, rising in his stirrups, shook his mailed hand at the bishop for a moment, without speaking; then extended it right onward, as if menacing the castle. "Speak," said the bishop, "if any in yon train can speak; I answer no dumb defiance.—Say who ye are, and wherefore come ye?"—"False priest! disloyal prelate!" said the knight, whom rage alone had bereft of speech. "Full well thou knowest who we are, and wherefore we are come. Thou holdest a prisoner within thy godless walls, for whom the royaume of King Philip were but meet ransom. Thou wottest whom we mean. Deliver her suddenly and ransomless, or thy proudest turret shall kiss foundation-stone ere the morn;—darest thou deny that such is here?"—"And admit she be," said the prelate, "she hath sought shelter here, and here shall she abide till the royal mandate of King Philip claim her, not the light summons of nameless wanderers."—"Thou liest in the throat, priest!" said another knight, "but we will not parley in words with thee; we will suddenly return in stronger force, and see if thy towers then hold not softer parley with our catapults and arbalists."—"Advance a war-wolf against these towers," said the bishop, in the perfect calmness of resolved crime, "and that very hour the deepest moat of my castle shall be measured, by a weight that shall never be raised till the day of judgment."—"Thou darest not such outrage," said the knights, "in the face of Europe, of Christentye, of chivalry—thou darest not. We defy thee."—"Defy not me, ye triflers—*boys who ride* forth with a lady's favour for your

casque, and a sonnet for your cuirass! What I dare to say, I dare act, and avouch with sword and lance," said the warlike prelate. "And I say to thee, Bernard de Vaugelas, and to thee, Pierre de Limosin, for I know ye both, as well by your cognizances as by your saucy bearing, that I lack not royal warrant for word and deed. Ye shall have the proof anon! On the distant hills I see a royal courier, and he beareth him right onward to this castle."—"Thou shalt never be the wiser of his counsels," said the knights: "we will slay that false courier with our lances ere he arrive; right well we know the errand he rides on."—"Recreant and disloyal knights," said the prelate, "no marvel that ye thus insult the church in the person of her highest dignitary, when ye dare defiance to the missives of your liege lord the king: but look to the end!"—"Lawless kings and godless priests merit such meed," cried the knights, as they wheeled round in fierce career to intercept the courier. At the bishop's order signals were hoisted from the warder's tower to instruct the courier the path he was to pursue. The messenger, after checking his course for a moment, appeared to understand and obey the signals, and turned in another direction. Meanwhile the knights pricked up the hill, and soon reined their steeds on its summit, cresting it, as they stood, like a battlement of iron; while their men-at-arms, though sorely galled by the archers' shot that flew fast and heavy from the bishop's towers, gathered close to the drawbridge, so as to cut off the possibility of the messenger's arrival. The unfortunate courier saw his mortal peril, ride where he might; but he was not unprovided for the emergency: he attached his letters to an arrow, and, drawing the bow with his utmost strength, he shot towards the castle with good aim, and the arrow fell near the bishop's feet, at the same moment that the hapless bearer expired under the lances of the knights. The bishop in triumph held up the letters during this dreadful scene,

and immediately quitting his situation, the portcullis was lowered. The knights, after venting their rage in as many curses as must have made ample matter for their next confession, withdrew with their train into an adjacent wood, not caring to abide in the town, lest their commerce with some of the bishop's domestics, touching their secret admission into the castle, should be suspected.

Meanwhile Genevieve, left so unexpectedly alone and unobserved, had lost no time in profiting by the opportunity. She had noticed with quick observation, that the compartments of that splendid chamber were filled with curtains in strict conformity to its oriental costume; and she conceived that, through one of these, she might have easier and less discoverable access to the other apartments of the castle, than through doors hollowed in walls of stone.

Soon after the departure of the bishop, she raised one of the curtains, and found herself in a long vaulted passage, lit at the extremity by the flame that arose from an iron cresset. She advanced with trembling steps towards the light. It burned before an arched door, that closed the extremity of the passage. She paused in deep disappointment, when the sobs of an agonized spirit were heard issuing from the apartment; and, instantly forgetting her own dangers and terrors, she ventured to raise the latch of the door, and to enter. It opened on another magnificent chamber, but inferior to that she had just quitted. It seemed as if one were painted by the burning fingers of luxury and passion, for the welcome of their favourites: the other, as if arrayed by the gorgeous but cold hand of ceremony for the reception of its guests. All was chaste and splendid; a fretted lamp of silver shed its light on silken tapestry, wrought with the exploits of the Spanish knights against the Saracens; and at the upper end of the chamber lay a lady under a silken canopy, her veil cast over her head, and apparently lost in grief. So light was the *tread, so* soft the approach of Genevieve, that she

stood before the lady for some moments unseen as unheard, till the latter, flinging off her veil, gazed round her suddenly. The form of the beautiful Genevieve, gorgeously arrayed, gleamed before her like a vision. At the first view the lady uttered a faint shriek; then recognizing her, she instantly assumed the conscious dignity of "high habitual state;" for, without bowing her head, or extending her arm, "I know thee now," she said; "thou art she with whom I journeyed here, and to whom I intrusted a gem of price to win thy secrecy if thou knewest me, or thy aid if thou knewest me not: but I see," she said, casting a haughty glance on Genevieve's glittering habit, and then on her own tunic of dark blue velvet, sprinkled in silver with the lilies of France—"I see how it hath fared with thee: thy gay habit proclaims thee already the victim and the scoff of thy brutal enthraller. Why comest thou here to insult that misery, perchance, thy fatal beauty hath caused?"—"Lady," said Genevieve, offering her again the gem, "as pure as this gem sparkles, so pure is the hand that offers it to thine. Dare I else stand before thee? Dare I claim the sanctity of my sex, or feel that which I do this moment—that in thy presence I am safe, were I what thou deemest me?"—"Thou art wise as well as fair, damsel," said the lady, half rising from her couch: "to what lofty descent am I to ascribe speech so gentle, and thoughts so noble?"—"Alas!" said Genevieve, "humble birth and most unhappy lot were but worthless commendations to thy favour—I must win it by better deservings: by happy chance I have discovered the means of reaching this apartment unobserved; aid me to pursue those means, and if, as I deem, thou art with me a reluctant inmate here, we may yet devise for our liberation."—"May the saints aid thee in the purpose they have inspired!" said the lady fervently; "and now I bethink me, chance hath also favoured me. My chief attendant was

one of the deluded heretics men call the Albigenses: she was borne prisoner here, and became (by means I cannot tell) the loose companion of the godless bishop;—from thence she sunk into a menial, and now half her wretched existence is passed in carousal and vile degradation—half in weeping her former state: yet such fast-clinging hold hath she of her early errors, that when I bow to the cross, she ever quits my chamber, though it be all the while to hold loose talk with the pages in the antichamber. Such, alas! is the tenacity with which we cling to creeds, and the ease with which we resign principles!"—Genevieve sighed and shuddered at this portrait, as she reflected that the unhappy original had once professed the same pure faith, and, perhaps, possessed the same unsullied conscience, as her own. —"This will give us unobserved occasions of meeting," continued the lady: "but art thou not anxious, maiden," she said, "to know to whom thou hast proffered thy services?"—"Alas! noble lady," said Genevieve, "is it not enough that it is a woman, and oppressed? Trust me, no image touches mine heart more pitifully, save"—she said, while her eyes filled fast with tears, "save it were, perchance, that of a very aged man, deserted, solitary, and blind."—"I know not what thou meanest, damsel," said the lady, who appeared to be occupied by her own sufferings exclusively, and even in suffering to feel that superiority of rank which she dared not avow, and yet wished to be instinctively understood. "Perchance thy zeal will not slack," she said more proudly, "at the recognition of its object. I am Ingelberg, the queen, and wife of Philip Augustus."—Genevieve instantly sunk to the floor, and kissed the hem of her sovereign's garment: "and how," she said, raising her eyes, "how did I, a peasant damsel, dare to murmur at my fate, when the royal lady of the land is held enthralled by her false vassals? Madame," she continued, "where is the faith and power of thy royal spouse—of thy children—of thy

nobles? why is a helpless maiden the sole attendant on the wife of King Philip, and the sovereign of France? Oh God! forgive me, that till now I thought suffering the sworn-brother of humble birth alone!"

"Amen to thy prayer!" said the queen, smiling through her tears; "for surely the thought favoured much of ignorance. From that sad and splendid hour, when I sat by the side of Philip, the crowned queen of France, till this, never did I place my head on a pillow in peace, or raise it in hope. King Philip loved all womankind but me, and I bore his early wanderings without a murmur; but as my children grew up,"* (her voice was choked,) "my loving and loyal son, Prince Lewis, was urged by my wrongs to brave his father, dagger in hand, while yet a boy. Oh, what a sight for a mother and a queen to witness! But now King Philip, neglecting the crusades against Saracen or heretic, is given wholly to the love of the fair Agnes of Moravia: she hath borne him children; and for her sake was I to have been poisoned, that she might have reigned queen of France. Wherefore, holding my life to be merely perilled, unless I put the broad seas between my lord the King and me, it was my purpose to escape to the King of Denmark, my brother, and there enshroud me in the habit of a nun; for, trust me, maiden," gracefully placing her hand on the bright locks of Genevieve, "if peace ever settles on a brow that was once as fair as thine, it will be when wrapt in a veil, not when bound by the diadem of France!"

"But, my liege lady," said Genevieve, "were there not nobles and knights to assert the rights of the queen? Are they not now thundering at the gates of this palace of crime and tyranny?"

"And who are they?" said the queen, in a melan-

* This is a departure from history. Ingelberg had no children; and Lewis was the son of Philip by his first wife, Elizabeth of Hainault, whom Mezeray sometimes calls Isambeau.

choly accent?—"Even knights and troubadours. Alas! maiden, that I must initiate thee into the crimes and voluptuousness of these times! These men, who pride themselves on composing some disjointed sonnets as harsh as the hymns of the Albigenses, ever select some beauty or noble dame for the subject;—some of them have even dared to make *me* the subject of their songs: and it is to this I owe that they are now wasting their threats against these impregnable towers. They deem a mistress as indispensable to a troubadour, as a saint to a religionist. And if I owe my deliverance to them, it will be to a spirit of romantic and licentious gallantry, not to the devoir which true knights should pay, by their vow, to a persecuted female, and a deserted queen."—"Now go," said Ingelberg, "ere thine attendant surprise thee; and remember me, maiden, in thine orisons."

Genevieve again kissed the hem of her sovereign's robe, and regained her own chamber without observation.

CHAPTER II.

Sleep you, or wake you, lady bright?
Now is the fittest time for flight.

Castle Spectre.

THE next morning, Genevieve had scarce time to collect her thoughts on the important event of the preceding night, when the passage leading to her chamber rang with the tread of armed feet; and the bishop, harnessed all but his head, stood before her, a page bearing his lance and helmet.

"Damsel," he said, "a hasty summons calls me hence. I speed to aid the abbot of St. Etienne, to siege and spoil the castle of the Lord of Ventadour, who hath borne away the abbot's leman, and denies to hold her to ransom. Such aid may I demand from the abbot at mine own need; and harness was never buckled on bolder breast, nor lance set in rest by more warlike hand, than those of that mettled churchman. Pity and shame it is that he sporteth away life amid lemans and ladies, instead of rallying in the van of the Crusaders! Were not a woman the cause, never would he have lifted spear against the Lord of Ventadour, though he had burned the abbey over his head. A peaceful churchman, and an orderly!"

"What churchmen!" thought Genevieve, as she stood silently before him, offering mute and internal thanksgiving for his absence on any terms, as feeling herself free from persecution and peril worse than death for that period at least. She was about to add, "I thought your intendment was against the heretics;" but she checked herself, conceiving that she might learn more from the bishop's communications than from her own inquiries.

"Nay, seat thee, damsel," said the prelate: "why should trembling beauty stand servilely before one who hath ever been beauty's vowed slave? Can aught be done to pleasure thee in my absence? Speak and command me."

"If my lord would listen to the prayer of his handmaid," said Genevieve, "let me be permitted to walk more frequently in the gardens of the castle." The bishop's brow contracted. "Oh!" said Genevieve, clasping her hands, "let not my lord be angry, —I dream not of liberty or of hope. But let me breathe the pure air of heaven, see the distant mountains above the walls of my garden-prison; see the work of God's hands, not of man's, once more, and weep in freedom,—grant me but this. Alas! here,"

she continued, "the rich and heavy odours of these perfumed chambers are like the steams of intoxication, magic, and sin."—"Order shall be taken for it," said the bishop, softened by her supplicating earnestness. "But well didst thou term thine hope of escape from hence a dream; for in mine absence will rule a sterner master of this wild household than I have been, an austere priest now, though once a preacher of thy heretic creed."—Genevieve, accustomed to vicissitudes, heard him without betraying any emotion. "Wouldst thou know who is the master of my household in mine absence? It is thy former associate, even the deacon, Mephibosheth: was not such his Jewish name?"—Genevieve, who feared that her answer might provoke him, was silent, till reading in his eye that her silence displeased, she uttered what she felt in three short words,—"Is it possible?"—"Possible!" retorted the prelate, "all things are possible to him who grasps with one hand the sword of earthly power, and holds in the other that visionary key that unlocks the portals of the world to come. Maiden, be wise! obey the lesson that the wise deacon hath set thee; and, look thou be in more tractable mood on my return."—"And by what means," said Genevieve timidly, "hath such sudden conversion been wrought?"—"By means proportioned to their end!" said the bishop. "Give me man, not brute matter to deal with, and I will baffle the boast of that antique dreamer, who said, 'Give me where I may stand, and I will move the world.' There be weights some may not raise with levers, and others can balance with a straw. Slight engineers were we, unless we knew what load was to be drawn with wain-ropes, and what with a thread! They had fasted and penanced the worthy deacon in the abbey of Normoutier, till he was a mere skeleton. I wrought by other means: I caused the deacon not to fast, but to dine with me. The controversy was hot, and so

were the viands; the strife rose high, but higher mantled the goblets; and the man who would have contended at the stake for his faith, resigned it for a mess of pottage, swallowed councils and confections in the same mouthful, and digested the celibacy of priests by the help of an eringo pie. What! shall I lose a convert for lack of saffron* in his condiment, or hurl fathers, fire, and faggot at one who is best convinced by marchpane and malvoisie?"—"And canst thou rely on the sincerity of such converts?" said Genevieve.—"For their sincerity, I reck not of it!" said the prelate; "but on their thenceforth close-linked fealty to me do I most surely reckon. Their crime hath placed a gulph between them and mankind; their former fellows dread and hate, their new associates doubt and despise them. In such a state they can become important only by crime; therefore by that they distinguish themselves, and are flagitious by the fixed necessity of their situation. The habit of doubting, too, ends for the most part in infidelity: then are they meet for any task that power and guilt may enjoin them. Oh! for a ruthless despiteous deed, appoint me ever your cold-hearted infidel, not your burning bigot: the latter may exalt crimes into virtues, but the former holds virtues very crimes; he loathes those habits he cannot participate in, those hopes he cannot aspire to, the forfeited blessings of the birthright he has sold: and therefore will he labour to prove, that they who trust in them are fools; that their virtue is hypocrisy, their religion a name, and their hope a lie."—Alas! thought Genevieve sadly, that such high gifts of physical power and mental might should be bestowed on one like thee, who wieldest them only against the power that gave them!

* Saffron was then deemed so exquisite a delicacy, that a satire still extant upbraids the ladies for abridging its use in their kitchens, to employ it in cosmetics.

"What thinkest thou of my convertite?" said the bishop, with haughty irony.—"May Heaven have mercy on him!" said the maiden.—"If thou disbelievest what I tell thee," said the bishop, "wilt thou believe thy senses?" And he stamped with his armed foot, and at the sound the quondam deacon, Mephibosheth, in full clerical habit, advanced between two priests of the bishop's household, all three chaunting with as much vigour and vociferation as St. Augustin of yore, when he approached the Saxon king, with the cross in the van, and the priests in the rear singing litanies.

"Suffer me," said the bishop, "suffer me, fair lady, to present to thee our chaplain and secretary—even Sir Ambrose, a reverend priest of the grave and godly household of the bishop of Toulouse. Come on, Sir priest; speak for thy function. Expound to this fair heretic the texts that concern this matter of thy conversion."

At the word, Sir Ambrose advanced, and forthwith commenced a predication, so long and loud, urging with such inverted tenacity all the most popular topics of a Catholic controversialist, and breathing so hotly the spirit of proselytism to his new creed, that Genevieve, after raising her appealing eyes to the bishop and preacher, at length, saddened and sickened at heart by this horrid prostitution, burst into an involuntary flood of tears. The bishop, though he despised tears, could not behold those of beauty unmoved, and he dismissed the deacon.

"See now," he said, "by what threads weights may be drawn. That man would have bit out his tongue and spit at me at the stake, yet hath he melted before the fires lit in my kitchen. I hold your true infallibility lies not in a conclave, but in a council of your sapient and savoury cooks, and Sir Ambrose deems the doctrine orthodox."—"I ever held him a slave to sensual appetite, and a boaster," answered Genevieve.—"And for those who are slaves to *mental appetite*," said the bishop, "it is as easy to find

fetters—or snares :—ambition—pride—even rapacity —they be glorious guilts that boast themselves—faults that men share with the mightiest of earth's lords ; perchance, if all that is written in thy forbidden volume be true, with the highest order of angelic beings : but sensuality, the low and loathsome working of a carnal spirit, proves it not *my* power to discover such an agent, and to make him work my will ?"—" There be those who, I yet think, would resist all that thou couldst offer—and thy power is mighty ; all thou couldst menace—and thy wrath is deadly," said the maiden.—" Name them," quoth the bishop, glancing over his tablets. " I have names here written down. Mattathias, a brutal warrior ; Boanerges, a powerful preacher. The saints speed me through this catalogue of names, assumed from their Jewish theology !—Why, maiden, I tell thee," he said, laughing at the list, " as lightly as I won the deacon Mephibosheth to become my chaplain—it is but after a few hours of torture or of luxury, as we have to deal with strong or with relaxed habits, to put a lance into the hands of the mighty, or a text into the mouths of the eloquent, and thy Mattathias and Boanerges shall severally volley their arrows or their curses against what side I choose to point. The one I could win by the glory of riding a knight in the crusading army—the other by the hope of out-thundering all its trumpets in proclaiming the miracle of his conversion."—" It may be so," said Genevieve, trembling at her own temerity, " it may be so : but there are yet two names unwritten in thy book of seduction and death."—" And which be they ?" said the bishop.—" Those," said Genevieve, " of a blind, poor, and aged man, who would spurn at the proffer of all visible creation, being as one who sees the *Invisible*, and prizes that vision alone ; and of a despised and enthralled maiden, who sets all claim of glorious ancestry below the boast of inheriting his faith, his fortitude—and, if Heaven so wills, his sufferings."—The bishop's trumpets sounded to horse as she spoke, and

he started on his feet at the summons, snatching his helmet and lance from his page. He paused a moment, and flung back one wild and flashing glance on Genevieve. "Maiden," he said, "by heaven I leave thee with reluctance, though that trumpet sounds me to the fearful game, which I love as laggards love their chess and draughts. Thy voice would wake a warrior's soul within him more deeply than all the trumpets of a royal host, were they thundering around the oriflamme of France. But every word thou speakest rivets the chains of thy destiny more fixedly. Thou must be ours," he said, with reverted glance. "Thou must be *mine*," as he flung his helmet on his head; and, the streaming plumes floating far backward at the motion, he strode from the chamber, leaving Genevieve relieved by his absence, but dreading that after that absence worse was to be feared from his return.

For three following days her existence was as wretched as prescriptive and monotonous existence always must be. In the afternoon she was permitted, and even enjoined, to walk in the garden; for the bishop was as jealous of the beauty of a selected favourite, as a florist would be of the stripes of a tulip, or the tint of a hyacinth. But never did she quit her chamber, or take her guarded walk, save watched by two sentinels, who crossed her path at every step: her only hours of indulgence were those passed with the imprisoned queen, whose apartment she gained every night by means of the passage through the oriental chamber, without detection or even suspicion. They sat together—wept while they talked of hope, and hoped more fervidly while they wept:—then parted with mutual assurances of happier prospects on the morrow; and met with the melancholy smile that announced the augury vain: and, while the last day's disappointment wrung their hearts, prepared for the renewal of the pang by talking of the hope that to-morrow would bring forth."

It was on the fourth evening that Genevieve, raising with slow and timid touch the latch of the royal apartment, beheld queen Ingelberg standing right opposite to it, her form irradiated, and buoyant with hope and joy. "Tidings," she cried, ere Genevieve could well enter the apartment, "tidings of hope! Bernard de Vaugelas and Pierre de Limosin are riding near the walls of the castle. I have strained mine eyes from the casement the live-long day, to watch them as they rode. I saw them careering at the head of a troop of men-at-arms; and so aptly did they counterfeit in their action the surprisal of a castle by a secret passage, and the deliverance of an imprisoned lady, that while I beheld them I deemed myself at liberty again: and, for my better assurance, the streamers of their lances were all of green, the cherished colour of hope; the very same their scarves were of in the lists of the castle of Plessy, when their sonnets were first sung, and their lances shivered, in honour of the fair queen of France. But why speak I of this to thee, who art ignorant of the gallantries of a court, as," she added with a sigh, "thou art innocent of its crimes?" Yet a reminiscence of former splendor and gaiety mingled obviously with the regret which Ingelberg seemed to bestow on the errors and the perils of courtly existence. "Now aid me, damsel," said the queen, with renewed spirits, "to place this lamp in the casement; for well as I might judge by their signals, they required me to leave the casement ope, and place a lamp withal, in token that I understood and approved their purpose."

Genevieve obeyed; and then seated herself at the casement, trembling with hope, solicitude, and doubt. The queen never ceased to utter vivacious and rapturous exclamations. Genevieve was deeply silent. The one, whose habits had been (with some interruptions) those of command and pleasure, felt that she breathed once more in the lofty elements of her native atmosphere: to the other, joy was so rare a

visitor, that when it came it was slowly recognized and timidly welcomed.

The night was calm, the lamp burned with a steady light, and the stillness of high expectancy in that lonely apartment was singularly contrasted with the sounds of revelry that rose from the hall below, where the loose household of the bishop were feasting.

They had not long sat thus, when the queen asked her, did she not hear a sound approaching? "Of a surety do I, royal lady," said Genevieve; her senses bearing joyful testimony to the hopes of Ingelberg: each interpreted the augury according to their different associations.

"It is like the floating of a knight's bannerol," said the queen.—"Methinks," said Genevieve, "it is like the fluttering flight of a wearied bird:" and as she spoke, a pigeon flew through the open casement: then, scared by the light of the lamp, it fluttered round the chamber, and at last rested on the bosom of Genevieve; while the queen, who understood this mode of communication better than her companion, soon detached an epistle, elaborately tied and curiously perfumed, from the wing of the wearied bird: its superscription was—"To her who, in yielding the title of Queen of France, hath won that of Queen of all loyal hearts and stout lances:" and the first lines of the epistle corresponded with such induction, for they began—"Let all loyal lovers utter vows to their Lady Venus and the blessed Saint Martin, whose eve devout Christians are now about to celebrate, and they shall find their prayers answered."

"Alas!" said the anxious Ingelberg, "how mockful in our hour of wretchedness is that jargon of profane gallantry to the ear of a prisoner listening for the hope of her disenthralment; it is worse than the language of France sounded in mine ear when I first heard it: and mine eyes so ache, and mine hands so tremble!" she cried in tears, letting the letter fall; "and I have no one to read to me the purpose

couched in the fine fooleries of their poetical and courtlike affectedness."

"If it please the queen's grace, I skill to read," said Genevieve timidly.—"Thou!" said the queen in amaze: "then thou hast deceived me, and surely art of noble birth, or else" (she added, pausing and recoiling)—"a heretic!"—"Does it avail," said Genevieve humbly, "what she may be, who, in the hour of extremity, can render true service to her sovereign?"—"Read on, then," said the queen, "sith it must be; but overpass those flourishings and gaudy illuminations of the scroll, and come plainly to the text."—"The purport is," said Genevieve, with difficulty disentangling the meaning from the intricate meshes of amorous phraseology in which it was involved, "that thy deliverers are this night conferring with one who hath promised them secret entrance into the castle; that they hold his promise stronger than his power; they dare not communicate more, lest messenger and message both be intercepted; but they will thee, royal lady, if thou receivest this letter, to return and superscribe it—'courage to loyalty, and hope to beauty.' Such is the letter," said Genevieve, blushing as she perused it. "And how, oh! how," said Ingelberg, impatiently wringing her hands, "can I return answer to them, being bereft of the writing materials I bore about me till I was conveyed hither?"—"Madame," said Genevieve, fertile in resources, "despond not yet. I bear a bodkin in mine hair that can make deep impression, and, from those four wax torches that burn so fair in the corners of your chamber, may we not glean enough to cover the paper withal, and trace on them the lines thy deliverers seek?"—"Do as thou wilt," said the queen, "for I give myself to thee solely, whatever thou mayest be. I am so lost betwixt fear and joy, that I could not now dictate, or write a line." Genevieve expeditiously and dexterously prepared the paper, traced the *required characters* on it, and then, with the queen's

assistance, fastening it by a silken thread, dismissed the bird of good augury on its flight. They then placed themselves once more close to the casement to await his return, each employed, though in different ways, in soliciting that aid, without which this desperate enterprise seemed impracticable; Genevieve, in silent internal prayer, and the queen in making a vow of a pix and chalice of pure gold to the church of Saint Olave, the patron of Denmark; but this situation, at once agitating and sedentary, soon became intolerable to both, and, with all allowance for the miscalculation of the progress of time, (unavoidable under such circumstances,) the delay of the bird's return, now protracted for hours, began to justify the terrors that seized them. Genevieve subdued the consciousness of her's in attempts to soothe the queen; but Ingelberg gave way to her fears, her repinings, and her impatience, with the vehemence of one long accustomed to consider even time her vassal, and to believe that mortal powers and agents, when employed in her service, should suddenly be invested with the might of supernatural ones. "Ah!" said she sadly, "why did I trust a deceitful troubadour?" and her memory suggested to her an ancient song, in which a disappointed retainer of one of them complains of their fickleness, arrogance, and levity; "they will promise any thing, but it is vanity, not truth, that prompts their boastings, and they would rather make themes for their own vaunting and perishable verses, than be recorded in the true histories of renowned knights. They will promise to ladies their liberty, to their brothers in arms the aid of lance and sword, to minstrels liberality, and to the saints jewels and robes of price; but their promises are false as vows made in wine, or love professed by a noble for a plebeian maiden:—who boasts and deceives like a false troubadour?" "Surely, royal lady," said Genevieve, "the knights will redeem their pledge; and even now something interposes between mine eyes and that star on which they

have been fixed so long." "It is a passing cloud," said the queen.—"But I hear the fluttering of wings."—"It is the sighing of the breeze," answered Ingelberg; but as she spoke the faithful messenger once more arrived, and the letter he bore contained intelligence beyond the imaginings of hope—their deliverance was to be unfailingly accomplished on the following night by means which the writer had not time to explain, but which precluded the possibility of disappointment or of discovery; and they had prudently delayed this communication, till, by the extinguished lights, they judged that all the inmates of the castle were retired to rest. "Did I not tell thee so?" cried the queen, offering her hand to the humble kiss of Genevieve, her despondency all forgotten,—"did I not say it from the first?—Why wouldst thou disquiet me with thy fears? Ah!" she cried, in the spirit of the age, "ah! who is it that loves and fights like the valiant troubadour?"

CHAPTER III.

The owls on the battlements cry,
Hollow winds they do murmur around,
Saying, Mary, prepare you to die—
My blood it runs cold at the sound.
Queen Mary's Lamentations.

From a troubled and melancholy dream, Genevieve awoke at dawn, with a confused consciousness of something important to be done or expected soon; even when her recollection returned, she felt like one stunned by the magnitude and indefinite extent of some vast and suddenly disclosed prospect. She could scarce comprehend her situation,—a heretic—the thrall of a godless libertine—the queen of France *herself a prisoner* in the same towers—their deliver-

ers knights, and troubadours, men valiant, loyal, (in the amorous language of the day,) but licentious, and, perchance, presuming on the success of their enterprise. With joy inexpressible she greeted the moment allowed for her brief exercise in the garden of the castle; for she felt that the agitation of her mind had extended to her frame; and that rapid and restless motion of the latter would be something like a balance to the painful impulses of the trembling dweller within. In the garden she almost forgot her terrors; the day was unusually lovely; there was a tender and vernal blue in the sky, a fresh mildness in the air, and a lingering glow of autumnal flowers, that transported the imagination, almost to the bright auspicious season that follows winter. There was a pillared arcade which the bishop had caused to be constructed to the south of the garden. Here, as Genevieve sat musing, in apparent slumber, on her situation of peril, and her hope of liberty, her sentinels, who had hitherto walked at a surly distance from her, now chanced to pass nearer; and she heard one of them say, "She sleeps, thou need'st not whisper;—I tell thee it must be done to-night."—"What must be done?" said his companion, "for hitherto thou hast spoken thy purpose darkly."—"The queen must be removed this night," said the other. "Here have been missives from the bishop, who, amid the thunders of the siege, found leisure to receive and answer the letters of King Philip, touching the matter of the queen's thraldom, and to send the order thou wottest of, and which must be suddenly obeyed."—"What cause hath the bishop to bear the queen such deadly hatred?" asked the other. "Tush, thou art a fool," said Hugues, "and knowest naught of state-policies; 'tis not the bishop's hatred, but King Philip's love, she must rue. So madly doteth he on the fair Agnes of Moravia, that he would bestow the choicest gem in his royal crown to make away queen Ingelberg. By lucky chance, in her flight she was captived by our far-reaching lord, who

hath made her sudden and sure removal the condition of obtaining men and treasures for the crusade. And such is the king's dotage, that he hath yielded to all that hath been required of him, and would have done so were King John of England thundering at the gates of Paris."—"The queen then dies to-night?" said the companion, with something like a reluctance of natural horror as he spoke. Genevieve's blood froze as she awaited the answer, yet still she preserved the appearance of sleep. "Deemest thou the bishop an unpolicied ass like thyself?" said Hugues, "no! he will have her conveyed in the deep sleep, into which the drug he hath sent me shall cast her, to that vault beneath her chamber, which many have been known to enter but none to return from. Yet his purpose aims not at her life: that will he preserve with jealous care, that, should King Philip deny him future aid, he may in a moment annul his adulterous marriage, by producing Queen Ingelberg alive."—"But being wholly in his power," said the other, "what needs there that sleepy drug thou minglest in her cup to-night?"—"To hinder cries heard, or resistance made," answered Hugues. "Fools would hold question till the day of doom! hear thou thy task; the rather keep the household from wandering near her chamber; say such is the bishop's command: look that the door to the vaulted passage be open, that she may be borne thither without noise or delay, and at midnight expect me bearing a royal burthen in my arms, and winning a royal guerdon by the deed."—"It is vengeance cold," said the other, who seemed but indifferently affected to the undertaking:—it is vengeance cold! Would the lady would awake!"—Genevieve, amid all her horror, had self-possession enough not to "awake" too soon; and when she at length appeared to do so, it demanded her utmost efforts to conceal the discovery she had made, and the feelings with which it had inspired her. Though her eyes were averted, she dreaded that her totter-

ing step and involuntary shudder would betray her horror of the assassins. At length she gained her apartment, and sat down in solitude and despair.

The dreadful fate of the unfortunate queen on the very eve of liberation, and with that fate her own involved—every way the prospect was horrible and hopeless; her mind succumbed beneath it, and she sat for a time in fearful stupefaction. But, long accustomed to demands for instant mental exertion, and never relaxed by the habit of indulgence even in grief, she struggled to rally her scattered and distracted faculties. Her first thought was for the safety of the queen; but how was it possible to gain her apartment till after the hour of supper? and *at* that hour the deadly drug was to be drunk, and she must see her no more.

One sole means suggested itself of obtaining an interview previous to the fatal hour of supper, and, feeble and almost hopeless as it was, she lost not a moment in attempting to employ it. She had observed that Hugues, who sometimes brought her meals, lingered secretly to hear the solitary hymn which she sung at their conclusion.

She had often discovered, that, while at her devotions, which always commenced and concluded with a hymn, he was gently pacing the adjacent gallery—and, as a stronger mark of his sensibility of music, he had even presented her with a small lute, obviously with a view to his own increased indulgence, though he said it was to soothe *her* solitude. To this resource, slender as it was, she now betook herself, and to propitiate him as far as her limited powers enabled her, she forbore to sing *hymns*, and tasked her memory for some antique Provençal ballads, which she had heard in her childhood. The spell wrought, he lingered and listened. Her voice, ever sweet and plaintive, now, under the influence of deep emotion, poured forth such rich and troubled tones that the wretch, with nerves of iron and heart of stone, after long reluctant struggle with a power

too mighty for him, at length cursed himself, yielded to it, and

He wept—he wept." *Moore.*

In a few moments after he entered the chamber, and, while placing preparations for her solitary meal, said somewhat slightly in praise of her voice.—" Alas !" said Genevieve, assaying her simple art, " thou canst not judge of it. I am a bird that never could sing encaged, were every bar of it gold : and to thraldom now is added loneliness. Had I but a companion, I think I could make music that would be pleasant to thine ear."—" Thou shalt sup in the hall to-night," said Hugues, after a pause, " though I peril my place for it, so thou wilt sing sweet songs that I love, and be as the other damsels of the household."—" Oh, no, no," said Genevieve, shrinking, " it is not that I aim at——look," she said, with an agonizing effort at playfulness, pointing to the cages with which her chamber was hung—" look where many birds are gathered, they sing not : they chirp and wander ; but where two are paired," pointing to a cage of doves, " there they make sweet melody ;—list to them as thou lovest music, and by that sweet charm let me see the imprisoned lady to-night. Oh, never did mountain bird, sullen and drooping on her perch alone, warble forth more blithely when restored to a dear mate, than will I, if by thee I may win the sight of that sad lady. Say me not nay," she cried, with vehement sincerity and unforced tears—" to-night I must see her, for my mind is wondrous sad and heavy."—" To-night thou must if ever," thought Hugues ; " to-morrow she may change her gaoler for a ruder one, and her chamber for a long and lightless prison."

Genevieve, who understood his horrid meaning but too well, sick at heart, replied not. Hugues stood pausing on her request : he knew his victim sure, and pondered how to purchase his indulgence at the cheapest price. " If she should betray me," said

Hugues, sullenly, compressing his under lip with his fingers. "Deemest thou me such a fool," said Genevieve, with increased fervour, "as to mar my last solace by mine own self-harming treachery?"—"Thou speakest wisely, damsel," said Hugues; "it were indeed thy self-harm; but," he exclaimed, turning suddenly, and fixing his dark and piercing eyes on her, "but whence is this marvellous importunacy, damsel, and so sudden too, that thou must visit that lady to-night?"—"Because," said Genevieve, "I have been haunted of late with fearful dreams: I have dreamed of the loss of a friend."—"Of what friend?" said Hugues, eyeing her more closely. "I have dreamed," said Genevieve, weeping unrestrainedly, "that evil was about to befall—"—"Whom, damsel?"—"Mine aged father," said Genevieve; and her tears flowed faster, while her nice conscience checked her at the word. "Now for that word, damsel," said Hugues, clasping her small fingers in his coarse hand, "for that word thou hast won. I am a reckless wretch; but that is the priest's concern who will hear my last confession. I have a mother—a wrinkled crone, who weeps and rails and swears, an I leave not the bishop's service, I am but a lost man: yet still I trow she loves me well.—Dry thine eyes, maiden: thou shalt see this lady: expect me at the twilight."

The interval between his departure and return was, to Genevieve, "like a phantasma or a hideous dream." Reflection was impossible: the very resources of imagination failed; nor did even a vision of bright impossibilities, such as often visits us in our moments of darkest desperation, flash upon her mind. She sat almost unconscious, till the gathering shades of evening reminded her that the hour was come: the steps of Hugues were heard in the passage, the light he bore gleamed through the crevices of the door; it was opened, and he beckoned her with cautious gesture to follow him.

CHAPTER IV.

Yes, I am come to do mine office on thee;
Thy life is wretched, and my stroke is sure.
MISS BAILLIE.

ON reaching the apartment, Hugues lifted the tapestry that covered the door, and dropping it again instantly, Genevieve found herself alone with the queen. She stood there as she entered, unable to quit the spot, to raise her eyes, or to utter a sound. The chamber was nearly dark, nor did either at first seem to distinguish the other. "Oh!" said Ingelberg, who appeared to start from broken sleep, "I have had such fearful visions. Wearied with thought, I tried to sleep; Virgin Mother forefend that mine eyes should ever again close, if they must see forms so terrible! I dreamed that I saw our friends riding all in the dim twilight, by the banks of a river, and that they ever motioned me to join them, still beckoning through the shade, and riding on. Oh, how I toiled to follow; but heaps of armour, broken and bloody, lay all before and around me; and still as I removed the massive pieces, heavier and heavier fell in my way; at length, I won the brink of the river, but there was neither bridge nor ford, and I stood bewildered, and calling on them, when a little bark, rowed by an infant, set out from the opposite shore. I entered it, and, oh! how powerless seemed the stroke of his oar in my dream, and how often the cross-set currents drove us back, ere we reached the centre of the stream. At length we gained it; when his form grew bigger —his eyes were fixed on me—a fierce and fiendish laugh rung in mine ears—it was Hugues.—And then —but why standest thou so sadly dumb and motionless? Speak, I pray thee, maiden; amid the gloom

of the chamber thou lookest like some dim spectre.—Speak, I command thee, speak!" she cried, in the quick loud voice of fear. Genevieve, in brief and broken words, communicated her dreadful tidings, she scarce knew how; and the queen with one piercing shriek dashed herself on the floor in utter despair. Genevieve sunk on her knees beside her, and, though hopeless, tried to speak of hope.—"Hope!" exclaimed Ingelberg, in a voice that chilled her blood.—"Hope!" she repeated, madly playing with the rushes with which the floor was strewed. Then, rising slowly, and her eyes vacantly but intently surveying every object in the chamber, till at length they rested on Genevieve,—"Yes, I will hope," she cried, falling on her neck, "for there is something in thy presence, maiden, that forbids despair."—"And even now, is it not as by a miracle I am in thy presence, and with the permission of him who guards thee?" pursued Genevieve, eagerly catching at a topic of comfort. "Is not this a prosperous augury, and proof that a true earnest zeal contends with all possible things, yea, with those that seem impossible, and overcomes them? May not something as wondrous interpose yet for thy deliverance?—And even now a thought visits me, wild but most hopeful. Now do I turn propheteſs in thy cause, queen, and presage most truly, that, if we may but reach the vault undiscovered ——"—"The vault!" exclaimed Ingelberg, recoiling with horror; "art thou mad, or wouldst thou drive me mad by such horrid mention? Is not that the place whither they are to bear me; the dungeon of mine eternal captivity? Were I but once to enter its dark round, hope, reason, life, would all desert me together."—"Hear me, royal lady, hear thy poor vassal speak only this once," cried Genevieve, zealously, "and then resolve even as thou wilt. Is not that the very direction in which thy deliverers must come?—and what if we meet them there? Is it not also a place of safety and of concealment? for who would search for thee there? Trust me, oh queen,

in this thing," she continued, trembling with energy; "yield to the strong impulse which rules me: for, since I have spoken, a light is on my mind, that, I do full truly feel, comes not from any earthly, or darker than earthly, power, but from that—" "Hush!" cried the queen, stopping her ears, "speak not thou of holy things—thou prayest not to holy saints."—"I pray to One mightier than they," said Genevieve, "even their Maker and mine—the Creator, not the creature."—"Hush!" interrupted the queen; "for, however fairly thy words are ordered, it were deep sin to listen to them. Speak to me rather of this hope thou seemest to point to."—"We will not speak of it now; it lies all shapeless and imperfect in my thoughts," said Genevieve, as the hope, at first so bright, rose in faded colours to her afterthought; "but in its furtherance I pray thee, royal lady, to meet this Hugues to-night with smiles and cheerful favour; give him all courteous entertainment, and seem to do him honour; cause him that he sit at the board with thee, and that he drink much wine; this will give me time to look stedfastly and definitely on that which is now dimly unfolding itself to the mind's eye. Nor must he," she added, "see thee thus with dishevelled hair, and robes all deranged. Will the queen permit so humble a handmaid?" and, lighting the lamp that hung from the roof, she approached, while Ingelberg silently let down her long hair, whose profusion of pale gold locks covered the chair as she sat. As she proceeded in her task with trembling and silent dexterity, "It is not alone in sleep we dream," said Ingelberg; "but now methought I was in my royal castle of Plessy; and thou, the most favoured of my damsels, wast braiding my hair with pearls. Tell me, may not this be yet? Thou wilt not answer? Dost thou then envy thy queen the last smile that may ever visit her lip?" and, as she spoke, though talking of smiles, she burst into an agony of tears.—"For Heaven's sake, madame, be more calm!" cried Genevieve; "alas, you will have much need of

calm dissembled looks anon."—"Doubt me not," said the queen, recovering herself, with a faint effort at cheerfulness; "thou knowest I have right to a double share of dissimulation, as a woman and a courtier, and thou shalt see I will not forfeit my privilege." As she spoke, steps were heard approaching; and the voice of Hugues sounded from an antichamber, where some pages were playing dice, and some women dancing loosely to the sound of the ghittern.—"Go hence," he said; "the queen is ill at ease, and must not be disturbed; and look that ye approach not these chambers again all this night." Ingelberg's blood ran cold at the sound, whose meaning she knew too well. A few moments after Hugues entered with preparations for supper, dismissing the pages at the door. Full of the terrible event of the night, the unfortunate females observed the most trifling circumstances attendant on this preparation with anxious and watchful attention. Hugues, entering alone, placed two silver dishes on the board, and afterwards two goblets on a trivet adjacent, with a vase of water, the eyes of the females following him at every movement; the queen's too intently, those of Genevieve cast down, shaded by her long dark eyelashes, but equally observant. When he had finished his preparation, he stood opposite to the queen in respectful silence, waiting for the signal to carve the meal. And now Genevieve was astonished at that conventional self-possession which is peculiar to the inmates of a court: amid all her agitation, imbecility, and terror, the queen addressed herself to Hugues with a mixture of condescension and dignity that enhanced each other; and none but a court-practised eye could discover, under the bland and beautiful smile that severed her lips, the anguish that stiffened her other features almost into convulsion.

"We thank our gentle gaoler," said the queen, "for the solace he hath afforded us in the society of this maiden, and will do him meet requitement when in our royal palace, where we shall smile at our en-

thralment to this proud prelate here, as we would at a vision of captivity that had haunted us in our dreams. Meanwhile, receive such requitement as we can give; sit at our board, and partake the meal with thy sovereign: and thou, maiden, sit too; we will it."—"Alas! madame," said Genevieve, feebly supporting her part in the drama the wretched queen was forcing herself to act, "alas! madame, demean not your royal rank by such a guest."—"Sit; we command thee," said the queen, while Genevieve obeyed with undissembled awe of reluctance. Hugues glanced his dark eyes from the queen to her companion, as if he would read their souls; then finally, with an expression resembling that of a beast of prey who is sure of his victim, and suffers it to sport out its space of misery without the possibility of avoiding its termination, he availed himself of the queen's permission, seated himself at the table, and, having no invincible aversion to rich viands, exquisite wines, and the presence of beautiful women, he soon became the most joyous of the party. His own intense devotion during the meal rendered him fortunately regardless of the slender and tasteless homage of his companions; and the wine, which the queen repeatedly urged him to drink, did not assist to quicken his powers of observation, farther than related to the unintermitting repletion of his ample goblet. Ingelberg, meanwhile, though apparently from time to time she touched her goblet with her lips, took care never to imbibe a drop of its contents. At the end of the meal, while Hugues was removing the dishes, (whose burthen had been lightened eminently by his exertions,) the queen exclaimed, "Alas! how different is this our gloomy meal in a prison, from those in our palaces and castles, where ladies danced, and troubadours sung, at the waving of queen Ingelberg's hand."—"Madame," said Hugues, whose spirits were not less exalted by wine than by the supposed condescension of the queen, (for, even in the temporary superiority given by crime or accident, vulgar minds

always feel their inferiority, and bow to the grace of the victim they prepare to sacrifice,) "Madame, it is a proverb in my country, that those who go forth to hear the song of the nightingale, return well pleased with the note of the thrush or the linnet; and if it please your grace, I will essay my simple skill." "It pleaseth us well," said the queen; and raising the untouched goblet to her lips, she said, "We drink to the strain of the thrush, since we may not hear that of the nightingale." There needed no more to excite Hugues, who, possessing a mellow though untutored voice, pantomimic humour, great self-confidence, and above all, the inebriation inspired by female beauty and applause, began with the "*Parrot*," by Arnaud de Carcasse, a whimsical licentious ballad, sufficiently popular then, and ending with repeating in a kind of recitative, and with much action, the *novel* of Peter Vidal; perhaps the most poetical and chivalric of all the productions of the troubadours. The queen, whose associations were easily excited, and whom neither terror nor peril could deafen against the voice of music and the force of dramatic action, applauded loudly; though sometimes, when her eye fell on the calm agony of Genevieve's expression, she sighed deeply, and, affecting to wipe the tears of laughter, felt they sprang from another source that almost froze them as they fell. Recovering herself, she cried, "Gramercy, fellow; thou hast pleased us well; and we would not willingly, during our short and enforced sojourn here, exchange thee for any other gaoler the walls of thy proud master hold."—"Royal dame," said Hugues, emboldened by wine, and the malignity of his conscious power bursting forth uncontrolled,—"royal dame, with all due humility, I do believe thou wilt have reason—(I say it without self-flattery)—to regret, when some sudden chance may cause thee to exchange thy present warder for another." The queen, who comprehended the full meaning of these words, fell backwards in her chair. Genevieve saw and felt the

peril of the moment: "Trust me, madame," she cried, "thy warder loves music, however rudely touched or chanted: he hath lingered to hear my rude song, and would, if your grace so please, I might sing it again!"—Hugues, elated beyond himself, exclaimed, "An if the queen will crown her grace to me to-night, she will demand of that damsel a single song."—"Sing, then, damsel, we command thee," said the queen; whom a glance from Genevieve had taught to give the air of command to an act of necessity. "So please you," said Genevieve, trembling at the temerity of her experiment, "I have little skill to sing, but, if Hugues will fetch from my chamber the lute he hath lent me, I will essay mine utmost to please the royal ear." Hugues with delight accepted the commission, and departed instantly.

The queen and Genevieve were left alone. "We have a moment allowed us: examine the goblet, royal lady," cried Genevieve. The queen shook her head. "Thou knowest not," she said, "the deep and deadly potency of the draughts that they call soporific. I bear about me a charmed ring—a mighty test of what is sanative or mortal."—"Apply the test, apply it without delay," cried Genevieve. The queen drew a ring from her finger.—"If," she said, "in this goblet there be ingredients intended for mischievous or mortal purpose, the metal will change its hue, as I touch it with this gem." She applied the ring, and the metal of the goblet darkened all above the surface of the sparkling wine. The queen fell back in speechless horror, faintly uttering, "Twice have I thus saved my hunted life: but *now*—" "And now shall it again be saved!" cried Genevieve with zeal that made her tremble at her own word and act—"I will exchange the goblets. He is inflamed with much wine, and will not note the change: urge him by some playful challenge to drain the goblet on his return; and for the rest——."

The steps of Hugues were heard: he entered, and

delivered the instrument to Genevieve, with the flushed and triumphant air of one who was at once the master of his crimes and of his pleasures. "Thou hast marred it in the carrying," said Genevieve, preluding on it to catch his attention: "the strings are all discordant." The exchange of the goblets had been made in his absence, and the queen, seemingly jealous of his attention to the symphony, exclaimed, —"With all thy boast of loyalty to the liege lady of France, I will wage this turquoise ring to the glass button in thy cap, that thou wilt not quaff thy goblet at a draught to her sudden deliverance from thraldom!"—"Will your highness do me reason?" replied Hugues, with inflamed visage and broken articulation. "Oh! deeply, to such a pledge: doubt me not," said the queen, slowly raising the goblet to her lips.—"Then is thy turquoise but a lost turquoise, liege lady," cried Hugues; "for I told him a coystrel and craven, who would not drink to a fair queen's pledge, till his brains turned like the vanes on an abbey tower, and rung like all its bells to boot!" and as he spoke, he seized his goblet and sunk on his knees, the queen bending on him looks fixed with horror for the event, while Genevieve, long accustomed to the suppression of emotion, testified hers only by deathly paleness and suspended respiration. But Hugues was now beyond all thought of suspicion; he raised the goblet to his lips, and drained it at a draught.

The hollow sound from the cup marked the engulphing of the last drop: and he remained convulsed, without the power to replace the cup on the table, or to rise from his knees, though he made many efforts to do so, accompanied with a ghastly laugh of impotent self-derision. Failing finally, he remained before them a moment on his sinking knees; his flushed features making fearful contrast with the stony fixedness of his eyes; then, so potent and profound was the effect of the *mithridate*, compounded by the most skilful chemist of that age, that

he sunk back on his knees, his head reclining against the adjacent chair, still sensible, but wholly powerless.

The queen, alike overcome by scenes of terror, whether she was agent or spectatress, fell back in her chair, powerless as her persecutor; and Genevieve, after vain attempts to rouse her, felt that hers must be the dreadful task to take the keys from the living and struggling corse, who, though he expanded his arms, groaned deeply, and gazed on her with his glassy lifeless eyes, in full consciousness of her purpose, had not the power to prevent it. It was a task less terrible, but more difficult, to rouse the queen; and it was only by displaying the keys before her eyes, that Genevieve awoke her to a kind of stupified recollection: her lips opened, but not a feature in her face moved; yet she spoke with a kind of rigid dignity, half the result of paralysis, half of remembered associations. She struck the keys as they swung in Genevieve's hand. "I know thee who thou art," she said; "thou art my gaoler—thou comest to lead me to another dungeon—but I must follow thee." And, to the astonishment of Genevieve, with moveless features, and unmeaning but unerring steps, she rose and walked to the door of the apartment.

Genevieve in this last exigency availed herself of an illusion, which, though frightful to behold in its effects, she felt it necessary to encourage—the safety of the queen of France was in the hands of a female peasant. She caught up the lamp and keys, and passed quickly from the chamber, Ingelberg following her in a state of preternatural excitement. The precautions taken by Hugues for a different purpose, had removed all the attendants to a distance; even he who was to have assisted in conveying the queen to her prison, had not arrived, as the success of Genevieve's enterprise had anticipated the hour of his appointment.

They descended the stairs unmolested and unob-

served, and Genevieve then perceiving a low and open door, that seemed to lead to the subterranean passages of the castle, entered it with the feeling of one who has in her desperate course neither guide nor choice. She was right in her conjecture; it opened on an inclined plane, which they traversed for some time, till it led them to a flight of stone steps, of which their feeble light showed them neither the termination nor direction. Genevieve, after a brief pause, began to descend: the utmost caution was now necessary; the steps were broken and unequal, often interrupted by masses of stone, that seemed to have fallen from the arched roof above. The roof itself, framed of unhewn stone, was in many places so low, she could hardly crawl beneath it, drawing her companion with cautious gentleness along; and the torch, their only resource, struggling with the subterranean damp and vapours, threw out its flame far behind them, its sparks hissing on the dank footing as they descended.

On the shaken mind of the queen, the darkness, the solitude, and the slow progress, operated, however, favourably: she recovered her reason, and recognized her companion; but it was only to add to the distress of the burdened and helpless Genevieve. Believing herself at a sufficient distance to complain in safety, she poured out her feelings without complaint, and never spoke but to harass her assistant with enquiries she could not answer, lamentations she could not soothe, and terrors she dared not herself bear the steady view of. For the latter there appeared but too much reason: the descent seemed endless, for Genevieve knew not it penetrated even below the moat of the castle. It did end, however; and the wanderers beheld at its foot a level path, but one that seemed of darkness impenetrable and interminable. They, nevertheless, advanced; when they shortly found their escape checked by a sheet of dark water, that, as it gleamed dimly in the light of their dying torch,

seemed, indeed, like the gloomy stream sailed over ' by that grim ferryman the poets speak of."—As they approached, however, it appeared to be a collection formed by the perpetual droppings from the arch above. They waded through it, and at the end of their progress found themselves in an apartment, long, narrow, and lofty, formed, like the passages, of rugged stone, and traversed crosswise by a low wall or screen which opened in the centre, and whose top was fortified with strong pointed iron spikes. Genevieve pushed it open, and when they had thus gained the interior division of the dungeon, she eagerly applied the key she had taken from Hugues to a lock she perceived on the inside of the screen. It turned in the massive wards—instinctively she locked and double locked it, and then placing her torch in an iron socket, she paused for a moment's breath and courage to enable her to examine this chamber of death. In the compartment they were in, her eye rested on nothing but four low doors of iron, which she doubted not led to remoter prisons, where the victims of the bishop's passions or power were conveyed never to return alive. She tried them all—all were fast secured. Mute and almost hopeless, she sunk back on a rude stone bench, above which the torch was suspended, and gazed around her, while the queen lay helplessly on her bosom weeping like a child.

It is at such a moment that every effaced or forgotten woe and terror presses back on the mind; and memory, with cruel and busy treachery, brings up all the past in aid of present calamity. She thought of that night of the subterranean escape from Carcassone, whose traces of terror were the first that had been inscribed on her infant memory. She recalled the madding multitude ghastly with famine—the midnight shrieks—the plunge—the dark and perilous procession—the heat, the crush, the press, the struggle for life—for life, when children trod over their fallen parents, and mothers left their

infants! She clasped her hands over her temples to preserve her reason, but loosed them in a moment, and bent eagerly forward. The suppressed but busy hum of many voices reached her ear from one of the doors, to which a key seemed to be applying. She listened—it was no delusion, her companion heard it too. "We are betrayed," cried Ingelberg, with a shriek that made the vaults re-echo." "We are pursued—we are lost; God and St. Olave aid us in this extremity!"—"Hush, hush, for Heaven's sake!" cried Genevieve, trembling with ecstacy, as she recognized the unforgotten tones of Amirald amid the increasing murmur. An unknown voice was then heard loudly exclaiming, "By Heaven! lords, ye do me wrong: this is the door, and if the key fail, what hinders that ye break down the door with what weapons ye have?"

"This passage leads right onward to the queen's chamber and——" "She is here—she is here!" cried Genevieve.—"Oh!" she cried, "as ye are true men, as ye are valiant knights, force, force the door, the life of a royal queen is in peril."—"In the name of Heaven," cried the voice of Amirald, "by what chance?"—"Seek not to know—stay not to ask," cried Genevieve, "bring axe and lever, and force the door on the instant—the life of the queen hangs on a moment."

At the word, twenty battle-axes began to ring like thunder on the door, while the attendants put all their strength to the task, sawing away the bolts, and thrusting their lance-points between the crevices, to loosen and widen the apertures. The din was enough to "stun the living and waken the dead;" but louder still were heard the exulting shrieks and agonizing vows of Ingelberg to every saint in heaven, but chiefly to St. Olave, for protection and deliverance. There was need of them now; for at this moment Sir Ambrose, at the head of half the household, furnished with arms and torches, rushed in at the opposite end of the vault.

The noise at the door, and the sight of the queen and Genevieve gave him in a moment to understand all that he had to fear; and his rage was increased almost to distraction, when he found that the iron screen, which Genevieve had locked on the inside, formed an impenetrable barrier between him and his victims. While some ran hastily for instruments to force it, and others followed them to shun his fury, the priest fiercely required some of the attendants to clear the screen at a bound and seize on the prisoners. The most active, hoping an ample reward, instantly obeyed him. He cleared the screen; but his feet slipping on the damp pavement, he fell, and breaking his leg, lay writhing impotently, and shaking his hand at his intended victims. Another, undeterred by this mischance, made the attempt; but his mantle catching in one of the spikes dragged him back on it, and he hung there till lifted off, bleeding and lacerated, by his companions.

The door began to give way. "Draw thy bow," said the priest, in fury, to an archer who stood by him, "and send me an arrow through yon fugitive on the instant!"—"I am not used to draw a bow against women!" answered the man, sullenly.—"Slave and dog!" cried the furious priest, "do as thou art commanded, or I will have thee hung from the highest tower of the castle for the vultures to devour thy flesh, and the hooded crows to peck out thine eyes—alive—villain!—alive!"

The man slowly and reluctantly fitted the arrow to the string. "Whom must I aim at?" said he: "there be two of them, and foul wrong it were if the innocent should suffer."

"I am Ingelberg, the queen of France!" cried Genevieve, presenting herself to the mark of the assailant. As she spoke, the arrow quivered in her side, and she fell bathed in blood, at the feet of Ingelberg.

CHAPTER V.

Come, go with me. I will bestow thee straight
Among a sisterhood of holy nuns.
Romeo and Juliet.

The first beginnings of recovered consciousness were to Genevieve accompanied by exquisite pain, and a gloomy confusion of ideas. As her fleeting senses returned, she perceived herself to be in a kind of litter, which however did not move: she felt also that her wound had been bound up; and, after some vain and painful efforts to recollect how she had been wounded, or why she was thus confined, she slowly drew back the curtain of the litter, and attempted to revive her dim perceptions by the sight of surrounding objects. The night-breeze thus admitted, though it chilled her frame, restored her faculties, and she began to comprehend her situation, which, though one of comparative safety, seemed still full of "doubt and dread."

The night was rough and stormy; masses of hurrying rack were driven fast across the moon, which, emerging from time to time, shed her full brief light on the group that surrounded the litter. Queen Ingelberg was in the centre, mounted on a noble steed, which she managed with a skill and spirit, that was more the result of habitual, than of native courage. She was surrounded by a band of armed knights on their war-steeds; and their steely forms now gleaming out in the broad moonlight, and now enveloped in darkness, gave a shadowy and spectre-like hue to their figures and movements. The bishop's castle, like a huge pile of rock, stood darkling in the distance; but the lights that flashed fast through every

loop-hole, the torches in the court that threw their sheets of vivid and abrupt light on the massive towers, and the increasing tramp and din within the walls, as the men-at-arms rushed to the sally-port, proved that the alarm had been given, and that the fugitives must owe their safety to speedy measures. They appeared to be holding eager and anxious consultation. "Take counsel for the wounded maiden first," were the first words that reached the ears of Genevieve; (it was the voice of Ingelberg.) "Take counsel, I say, first for the wounded maiden: if to you we owe our liberty, to her we first owed our life." Touched and melted by this grateful magnanimity, Genevieve drew the curtain wholly aside, and exerting her utmost strength, cried, "Set forward, noble knights, without delay: leave—leave me here. What is the life of a peasant damsel, weighed against the safety of a crowned queen?"—"We are, indeed, crowned queen," said Ingelberg, riding to her side. "But thou, methinks, wast borne one. Now by the soul of Waldemar, and the bones of blessed St. Olave, we stir not from this spot, till thy safety be cared for."—"Your grace lacks swift counsel in this strait," said Bernard de Vaugelas, who rode close beside her rein. "An if I may guess by the sound within yon towers, short space will be allowed to give or take it."—"What if we ride through the streets of Beaucaire, and raise the townsmen in aid of the queen of France," said Pierre de Limosin. "'Twill be the first time in their lives the *rascaille* were ever honoured by the summons of a knight, or the suit of a lady."—"The bishop would strait despoil the town of its privileges," said Vaugelas, "if one of his vile burghers wielded a bill, or shook a rusty target on our side."—"There is a convent," said a voice which thrilled through every fibre of Genevieve's frame, "a sisterhood of holy nuns not far distant: there may her grace take sanctuary, were the foul fiend chafing at the grate."—"To sanctuary then, a' God's name, and with what speed ye may!" quoth de

Vaugelas, closing the rivets of his helmet. "Hardly may De Limosin and myself, with our train, stem the torrent that will soon pour from yon barbican."—"Alas!" cried the queen, dropping her reins, "must my safety again be purchased at a price so dear? Hear me, Bernard de Vaugelas, if as a queen I can no longer command: as a lady and most distressed, I will not plead in vain to a loyal knight."—"My liege lady," said Vaugelas, with the proud gallantry of chivalry, "Honour your slave in your most generous thought so far as to believe him one who is not content alone to shiver a lance, or trill the lay of a wanton troubadour: no, on this spot to-night, he will leave bloody proof that the sovereign of his heart was also the lady of his life."—"I cannot fashion to set my words in such fair order," said the less polished de Limosin, couching his lance, "but, royal dame, I too *can die*." Their train gathered round the devoted knights. "Ah, Cœur d'Acier! ah, Bel-et-brave!" cried the queen, vainly addressing each by the *nom de caresse* she had bestowed on them in days of chivalric splendor and regal festivity—"Did ye not swear to me on the faith of knighthood, that ye would refuse me no boon demanded in those names?"—"Sir Amirald," said de Vaugelas, in a low voice, "by thy lady's love, and as thou wouldst have the benison of thy saint in thy mortal hour, convey the queen to safety: hark! they are lowering the draw-bridge." "Farewell, my liege!" cried de Limosin, "one tear for my tomb, and one mass for my soul, all thy loyal lover now can crave."—"No tears for me, my sovereign dame!" said the courtly Vaugelas: "my soul would be sad in paradise, if I thought my lady wept."—"Farewell ye priceless friends!" cried the queen in tears, as she turned her reins to ride: "alas! the dark stream that I saw in my vision, was it to foretel me this?"

The train set forward at the command of Vaugelas, and in the pain produced by the motion of the *rudely constructed* litter, Genevieve soon lost all

consciousness, and with it all the perils of her flight and the tumult of the conflict, whose sounds of terror pursued them for miles beyond the walls of the castle, where the safety of the queen was fiercely contended for by Vaugelas and Limosin.

By the light of the grey dawn, the fugitives found themselves in a narrow valley of considerable extent, bearing the same proportion to a champaign landscape, that a long gallery or passage does to the more spacious and splendid apartments of the mansion, yet not without its grace as well as its utility. A small stream wandered through it; its high precipitous banks of stone, like proud neighbours, overshadowing and almost concealing it; between their fissures many a tree was bending its branches, and interlacing its knotted roots—the boughs of some almost met over the narrow stream, and those of others closed around the low roofs of a small religious edifice dimly seen at the extremity of the valley. The objects thus gradually and partially developed partook of the character of the light by which they were beheld;—all was quiet, sombrous, and still. The travellers urged on their weary steeds, and followed with difficulty a track, rather than a path, that winding sometimes among rocks, and sometimes through water, was always so overshadowed by the branches of the trees, that the riders were compelled to bend to their horses' manes to pass through them. At length they approached the building as the last toll of a faint bell summoned its inmates to matins.

The building itself, simple almost to meanness, and nearly hidden among trees and rocks, gave no unapt image of an eremite amid his shades and solitude, humble, lonely, and sequestered. The unusual summons of a bugle at their peaceful gates, brought not only the portress, but the Abbess to the portal; the former held a feeble taper—for it was still twilight; the figure of the latter appeared faintly in the rear. "Shelter and sanctuary, holy mother, for a forlorn wanderer?" cried Ingelberg, "for one who

flies in peril through the land of which she is the queen."—"And thou shalt have it, royal daughter!" said the Abbess, flinging her veil over the head of the queen with a solemn air of protection, "were all the kings in Christentye thundering at this feeble gate for entrance. Enter in safety and peace; and, for thou knowest," she added, viewing Ingelberg's escort, "the strict rule of our order forbids the approach of man nearer than our grate, yonder knight with his train may harbour in a near hamlet." As she spoke, Sir Amirald had alighted and knelt to the queen, who extended to him her hand to kiss—"Pardon, my sovereign lady!" he cried: "my duty is fulfilled, and my task finished here. I left pledge beneath the towers of the bishop of Toulouse, and must redeem it or give life in exchange."—"I know thy meaning," said Ingelberg; "and wilt thou, then, for some fantastic toys of honour, desert thy queen and thy duty? Are thy life, and the commands of thy liege lady, of such light avail that a romantic scruple can outweigh them both?"—"By a true knight, royal dame," said Amirald, "his life is ever held cheap, when poized with a lady's commands, but both are underpriced when weighed with that which alone gives to life its value, or to a lady's commands the right to be obeyed—even his honour:" and, as he spoke, he flung himself on his war steed. "Am I the Queen of France?" cried Ingelberg. "Am I she at whose lightest word the brand of a thousand knights have leaped, as alive, from their sheaths, and who now am denied boon by one?"—"Detain him—Oh, detain him yet, sovereign lady," cried Genevieve. At the well-remembered voice, Amirald rode round to the litter, and, withdrawing the curtain, gazed on her for a moment—"Now were my dishonour complete," he cried, "were it beheld not only by the sovereign of my life, but the lady of my love," and, as he spoke, he fiercely pursued his way back to the castle of Beaucaire.

CHAPTER VI.

What means this tumult in a Vestal's veins?
POPE.

THOUGH Genevieve's wound on examination proved so slight that it was obvious the archer had purposely consulted her safety while he gave it, the tenderness of the queen would not suffer her for some days to quit her cell or her pallet. This interval she passed almost in utter solitude; for Ingelberg, exhausted by fatigue and emotion, remained in her apartment; and the nuns, when they had discovered that their guest was a heretic, (from her possessing neither cross nor rosary, and making no use of holy water) took care to remain no longer near her than was necessary for dressing her wound and supplying her with food. This solitude was as delicious to her as it was dangerous. Even amid suffering and peril the images of both had been effaced by the parting exclamation of Amirald; and now, in the stillness and repose of her cell, her mental eye rested with unwearied luxury of gaze on the bright scenes of its internal and new-found world of felicity. From the moment that she had felt that compassion for a wounded and deserted youth was rapidly exchanging for a sensation new, indefinable, and tumultuous, she guarded her heart against his image with a vigilance and firmness that suffered itself neither to be surprised nor seduced into admitting its approach for a moment. The insurmountable inequalities of rank and of religion, of station and habit, helped to sustain her fortitude, and aid her in the discipline of her heart, and though she could not make it cease to feel without making it cease to beat, yet so closely was its secret guarded, that the only indications of its existence were an increasing indifference to all

that had interested her before, and sometimes a sigh, for which she condemned herself the moment it was breathed. But Amirald's proclaiming her with his own lips the lady of his love, (a term much more significant in those days than ours,) had now alike banished doubt and constraint, and, though she deemed the obstacles to happiness or even to hope as impracticable as ever, yet still, by the deep delusions of passion, all felicity seemed comprehended in the consciousness of its mere existence; and the image of him she loved seemed sufficient for the occupation of her heart during the whole period of after-life. "Years hence," she thought, "those who see me shall say, 'Why does that pale maiden sigh when she sees a noble knight ride past?' but none shall be able to answer."

It was on the third evening after her arrival at the convent that the queen and Genevieve joined the nuns at the hour of supper. In the refectory and its furniture, as well as in the appearance of the groupe that occupied it, there was a tone of severity exceeding the usual rigour of conventual discipline, and which displayed a striking contrast to the gorgeous garments of the queen and her companion. The walls were of stone; a stone bench, extending the length of one of them, formed a seat; a coarse table, an iron lamp suspended from the ceiling, and a massive and grotesquely-carved chair, with wooden footstool, resigned by the abbess to the queen, formed all the furniture. As the rules of the community prohibited even the *sight* of meat at their board, the queen's repast was fish, an egg, and honey; and her beverage water. Genevieve partook of its remains, while the food of the abbess and nuns was roots which they had themselves reared and prepared; and they partook sparingly of the pure element with which the coarse cup of wood in the centre of the table was filled. The silent meal concluded, the nuns retired, and the queen began to converse in a low voice with the abbess. The countenance and expression of the

latter rivetted Genevieve's eyes, as she stood reverently behind the chair of the queen. The visages of the poor nuns had exhibited nothing beyond gloom and apathy, graduated according to the various lengths of their experience of a conventual existence, and the variety of temperaments on which that experience had to operate; but the features of the abbess wore that singular character of the expression of youth mingled with the lines of age, which characterises countenances where grief has been anticipating the work of time. The lustre of her full dark eye was unimpaired, and the noble regularity of her profile still possessed and proclaimed the high intellectual character associated with that class of features; but her cheeks were wan and hollow; and, as a few locks (which she hastily replaced) strayed from beneath her frontlet or her veil, the grey far outnumbered the black hairs—once blacker than the raven's plume. Genevieve gazed intently on her most interesting aspect, while the queen continued conversing rather *to* than *with* her, and the abbess telling her beads the while, listened with the air of one whose mind was wandering far both from her companion and her occupation. "Yes, my reverend mother," said the queen, "it was within these walls I was confined by order of King Philip,* while the cruel and unfounded process for our divorce was carried on, spite of the authority of the Pope, and the menaces of my brother, king Canute of Denmark; and here, in place of a stern monastic gaoler, I met one who, amid the chill of a cloister, had yet a pang for insulted royalty and a tear for injured love."—"It was my duty," said the abbess: "*haud ignara mali*," she added, with a painful smile; then checking herself, "I forgot that I had abjured all my profaner studies."—"And, reverend mother," said the queen, "deem you not that, when certain agents have been employed in the ordering of matters fairly

* She was confined in the convent of Soissons.

and fortunately to our wish, and such agents again surround us, bearing in the time and all other circumstance of their appearing a meet proportion to their former relation, that it is a kind of augury—a betokening—How shall I term it?—mine heart feels meaning, though my lips can frame no word for it." The abbess replied, "that it might be so; but that it was dangerous to build too close analogies on the mysterious and far-reaching dispensations of providence."—"Here are we," said the queen, explaining herself by facts, "under the very roof where we first tasted the offices of sisterly and christian love; and hither were we led in safety by that Sir Amirald, to whom, at the time of which we speak, we owed our honour and our crown as by a miracle!"—"A miracle!" repeated the abbess, raising her eyes.—"It seemed no less," said the queen;* for, when the pleading for my divorce was held before the Pope's legate, under the roof of the bishop of Paris, and the advocates of the king urged their reasons with such force and sharpness, that, when the crier proclaimed 'let the queen's advocates come forth,' none appeared in answer, then stepped there forth an unknown youth in our cause, who ordered his reasons with such sententious and weighty wisdom, and a gravity so learned and modest withal, that the king himself, as one amazed, put a stop to the pleading, and we were saved from disgrace and defeat, at least on that day; but, when the king caused search to be made for the advocate, no man knew aught of him, nor did we till lately learn that it was this Sir Amirald, who, though he thought no scorn to take on him the office of advocate for a distressed queen, yet would not have it known, as less befitting a knight than a cowled churchman or coifed son of peace:—but, mercy of Heaven! whence was that din?" she exclaimed;—

* This singular anecdote is told, I think, by Mezeray. The interposition of the unknown advocate was deemed supernatural.

"one at the portal seeks entrance." "No horn hangs at our peaceful gates," replied the abbess; and as she spoke the ancient porteress appeared. "An armed knight is at the gate," said she, "seeking to speak with the queen."—"What is his name?"—"I know not, madam."—"His cognizance?" demanded the queen.—"Alas!" said the poor recluse, "he looked so bright and terrible in his armour, that I hasted away; but his voice was like that of the young knight who rode beside your highness that morn."—"Sir Amirald!" cried the queen, exultingly. "Now, by the soul of Waldemar,* there be hopes;" and, hurrying Genevieve along with her, they presented themselves at the grate; and never, in the wide luxury of a veranda'd casement, did beauty look so interesting as through the rude and narrow grate of a convent. The hardness of the frame augments while it contrasts the loveliness of the portraits which it encloses. Sir Amirald dismounted, and, kneeling on one knee, gracefully doffed his casque to salute the queen, while his eyes were fixed on Genevieve alone. "Now, thou truant knight," said Ingelberg, "how darest thou venture into the presence of a queen thou hast so lately disobeyed and deserted?"—"So please you, royal dame," said Amirald, the brightest suffusion of joy dyeing his cheek and brow with vermilion, "the tidings I bear embolden me to press into your presence, were my fault even more heinous."—"Now, Heaven, if it be thy will—Bernard de Vaugelas and——"—"Are living men, and still bear stout heart and strong lance for the service of the queen." Ingelberg with devout gratitude began to tell her beads: "And better thus employed," she cried, "than in causing masses to be said for their souls. But haste thee and tell me."—"They were made prisoners by the bishop's men; and, being lodged in the same tower, and waited on by one who

* Her father.

had been about your highness's person during your thraldom, and who feared that the bishop on his return would take his life, he contrived a means of escape, on condition he might accompany them, and now have they reached the vicinage without discovery or pursuit, purporting to join you to-morrow in your meditated flight, should you still," he added, with a peculiar expression, "mean to pursue it."—"To-night, to-night," cried the impatient queen; "this very night will I set forth. The bishop may pursue—king Philip may discover my course; a lost hour is perchance the loss of liberty, of—"—"Your grace does not lack their aid to win your liberty," said Amirald, his countenance assuming increasing resplendency of colour and expression; "it is achieved already. The remonstrances of the Holy Father, and the repinings of Agnes of Moravia, have changed the heart of king Philip: he waits to welcome you again as his spouse and queen. The pope, for this concession, legitimates the children of Agnes. All is at peace between the Louvre and the Vatican; and your faithful knights, instead of aiding the flight of a fugitive, will now grace the progress of a glorious queen, returning to dwell among princes and palaces."—"It is too much happiness," said the queen faintly, while giving him her hand through the grate to kiss, she leaned back exhausted on the shoulder of Genevieve: then suddenly relapsing into suspicion and fear—those habitual guests that do not soon forbear the mansion they have begun to inhabit,—"And how," she cried, "does this suit the tidings we have heard, that our son, prince Lewis, is leading a strong force in aid of the crusaders, whilst king Philip never advanced mark or man before in the cause? And must it not be on the sad condition that I shall be the thrall of the bishop of Toulouse?"—"By all the saints—by all and aught that knight or Christian may swear by," said Amirald, his features on fire with the earnestness of that conviction he *felt*, and feeling, impressed on his hearer, "the

tidings I bear are mere truth. Ask Bernard de Vaugelas else. Prince Lewis, at the head of a strong band, will not lightly be won to quit his post. Nay, royal dame, image to thyself a valiant prince at the head of a host he was panting to lead, would he be checked in his course of chivalry and conquest by the long-suspended, and often-contradicted commands of the king of France?"—"Thou persuadest me to hope even against hope!" said the queen, "and I will believe thee. Now, whom," she cried, in the natural effusion of a beneficent heart, "whom shall I make happy? Kingdoms would I give at this moment, were kingdoms in my gift! By the rights of our recovered queendom we will not leave this spot, till thou, loyal knight, and thou, loving damsel, have asked and won a boon worthy of a sovereign to bestow."—"Sovereigns can bestow honour," said Amirald, faltering and blushing, "but love alone can give felicity."—"Ha! goes it there," said the queen, smilingly: "Why, god-a-mercy, boy, thou must have a Belle-amie before thou hast a beard. I think thy lips be as smooth as those of any lady in our court. Well, when we win Paris, if this lady Guinever of thine refuse the intercession of a queen, we will deem her lacking in courtesy."—"She is not there," Amirald was about to say, while his eyes fixed on Genevieve were pleading still more eloquently; but the queen, too happy to heed him, had turned to her favourite. "For thee," she said, placing her hand on the brow of Genevieve,—"for thee we will shape out a noble fortune. Thou shalt with us to the court, thy matchless beauty shall lack no aid of rich attire, and ample dower; and the proudest noble in king Philip's palace shall not think scorn to mate with the peasant maiden who saved the queen of France."—"Oh, not to the court, my sovereign," replied Genevieve, with deep but respectful firmness:—"not to the court, if it please the queen? I should deem it foul shame, if, while my people eat the bread and drank the water of affliction,

I were dwelling in palaces. I should be a mournful, ill-placed, abused thing! Never—oh, never will I revel on dainties, while they dig the earth for roots, or eat the grass of the field! Never will I be robed in sinful and superfluous luxury, while they shiver in cold and nakedness! Never will I couch on down, while their bed is the rock; and that pale sightless old man," she said, with increasing emotion, "I should hear his voice amid the music of a royal bower: while I paced through palaces, he would tell me he lacked a guide in the desert. Oh! pardon, royal dame, if my words offend! but never—never—" and the agonizing tears of recollection burst forth and choked her voice. Ingelberg was affected for a moment, then struggling with feelings which her faith condemned—"We have sworn deeply," she said, "that we will not hence, till thou hast asked a boon; nor may the oath be forfeited! Speak, then, maiden, and remember it is not easy to task the gratitude of a friend, or the power of a sovereign."—"Royal lady," said Genevieve, kneeling and kissing her robe, "since he, in whose hand are the hearts of kings, turned thine husband's towards thee again, oh! win him to deal gently with his suffering subjects. Trust me, my liege, hearts more loyal beat not in living bosoms; hands more bold never wielded lance in fields of battle. Let our liege but yield us the grace to worship Him in whom we trust after the dictates of our conscience, and of his word, and then shall our sovereign see all through fair Languedoc, every man sitting under his vine and his olive, fearing God and honouring the King." Queen Ingelberg shook her head—"Thou proposest hard matter, maiden," she said; "but, though it cost the king's displeasure, I will not fail to redeem my word. We will send holy priests, not armed knights, to convert thine erring people; and oh, that thou mayst be the first-fruits of that milder mission! and now," she added cheerfully, "the queen hath a boon to *ask of thee*. Wear this for my sake," she said, de-

taching a carkanet of jewels from her neck, and fastening it round that of Genevieve: "Now beshrew thee and thy peevish heresy, that will not let thee visit the court, were it but to show how well a carkanet suits thy white and graceful neck. I ask it not as a boon," she added, more seriously, "that thou wilt wear this ring of small price," putting it on her finger. "It is marked with my name, and thou wilt prize it, not as the gift of the queen, but as the memorial of Ingelberg."

At sight of the costly ornament of gems, Genevieve burst into transports of grateful joy, and the queen drew back disappointed and displeased. "If we are to learn that thou prizest these toys," she said, "we can enrich thee, peasant, beyond thy wishes, yea, thy very dreams."—"Royal dame," said Genevieve, while a proud but modest suffusion dyed her cheek, "When thy vassal dies, those who are beside her corse shall find this treasured ring next her heart; but for these jewels—their price is yet more precious to me. It shall procure a guide for him from whom cruel men have rent both his eyes, and his child, whose aid made him half forget their loss; yea, on thyself, queen, shall the gift be visited in blessings. It shall extort prayers for thee from many a bleeding and many a broken heart. They shall contend with and prevail against the cries that arise hourly to the throne of God against our slayers and persecutors. For me," she added, repressing her enthusiasm, "foul shame it were, if, while youth and health remain, I sought subsistence from the bounty that the weak and aged lack. The labour of her own hands shall clothe the peasant maiden with garments meet for her, and God will give her food."

"Alas!" exclaimed the queen, kissing her forehead with a sudden impulse of admiring love—"Alas! that thou *wilt* be a heretic: but," she added, "in this thy self-forgetfulness, order must be taken for thee: whither wilt thou go, and what is thy purpose?" Genevieve expressed her humble wish to

seek shelter with some relatives in Toulouse; "And if I must weary my liege for a boon," she added, "let me have a safeguard thither, that I may meet no hindrance or wrong."—"Sir Amirald himself with a chosen band of men-at-arms (maugre all the crosses on their breasts) shall be thy guide, thou false heretic," said the queen, playfully entwining her fingers in Genevieve's dark luxuriant ringlets as she spoke:—"Will such guard content thee?" Elated yet trembling at the words, Genevieve felt half about to say "aught of peril but his presence;" but she checked herself, half from awe of the presence in which she stood, half from an internal yielding, which she condemned while she submitted to it; and murmured, "it must be as the queen and the noble knight shall will it." "As the noble knight shall will it! as the queen commands," said Ingelberg, resuming rapidly the language of royalty. "Sir Amirald, we command thee to guard this fair damsel where she listeth, but look that thou convert her by the way," she added smiling. "And now meseems that errand is not all unwelcome: there was a gleam on thy features like summer lightning as I spoke." The young lover bowed to hide his blushes from the queen. "For thee, Amirald," said Ingelberg, "we will ourself be the builder of thy fortunes: trust our royal word, and we will give the solemn pledge for its redemption. Hie, maiden, to the abbess, and ask from her that priceless relique we consigned to her care the night her walls first sheltered us."

Genevieve soon returned with the abbess, who placed the relique, inclosed in a small box of silver, in the hands of the queen, and then dropping her veil at the sight of a man before the grate, stood apart. "Take this relique," said the queen, attaching it to a chain of gold. "It holds the holy dust gathered from the bones of the Protomartyr, who perished at Jerusalem under the hands of his fierce and bloody countrymen. Why lingerest thou? Seek-

est thou aught more from us?"—"Beyond all that pilgrim or palmer ever bore from holy land," said the young knight, blushing as he knelt, "would I prize the silken band that binds yon maiden's hair." —"A silken band!" said the queen "nay we will give with that a lock of the dark and silken hair it entwines."

Genevieve did not presume to resist, while the queen with her own hands cut off a lock of hair as rich as ever crowned the head of regal beauty. "Now," said the queen, "yield him thy white hand to kiss." Genevieve retreated. "The noble knight," she said, "must not profane his lips on the hand of a peasant maiden."—"When hath he kissed a fairer in a royal bower?" said Ingelberg, seizing her hand, and offering it through the grate to Amirald. At this moment the abbess wrapped her veil around her and retired. The movement was unobserved by the rest; the queen triumphed in the interchanged pledges of valour and beauty, which revived all the associations of her former chivalric and courtly existence. The young knight trembled as he kissed the white hand extended to him, as if it were rather accorded to the command of the queen, than the act of the possessor; and a new and nameless sensation trembled through the pure frame of Genevieve, when she felt the soft lip of Amirald, for the first time, touch and press her hand. "We are wearied," said the queen, reclining on the shoulder of Genevieve; "we are wearied," laughing and wiping away her tears, "with excess of happiness; we will retire to our cell, and pass the night in orisons to the saints for our present felicity and our future hopes. And oh," she said, "oh that thou couldst share them!"

CHAPTER VII.

Oh ye dead! Oh ye dead! whom we know by the light ye give,
From your cold gleaming eyes, though ye move like those that live.

* * * * *

It is true, it is true, we are shadows cold and wan,
It is true, it is true, the friends that we loved are gone.

Moore's Irish Melodies.

GENEVIEVE'S full heart felt its need of orisons too; she trembled at the perils of her situation, though it seemed now to embrace all that was delightful to hope, or flattering to love. The increasing tumult of her heart began to terrify her, and she resolved to commune with it in solitude, and, if she could, to bid it be still.

After attending the queen to her oratory, Genevieve, with that impulse caught from her early habits, which prompted her ever to pour forth her prayers, when she could, amid the liberty of nature and the light of heaven, hasted to the garden of the convent. The enclosure (so called) was of as simple and austere a character as the fabric to which it belonged; no flowers were cultivated there; it contained only vegetables for the food of the recluses, and vulnerary or sanative herbs for the use of the sick and maimed whom they tended; one broad and grassy walk extended its entire length, lined on either side by tall pines, whose branches, almost meeting above, gave to the passenger the idea of traversing a cloister. At the end of this walk a hoarse and shallow stream interrupted by its sole sound the deep repose of the scene, its waters darkened by the shade of the trees; on the bank was a rude seat formed of the trunk of a fallen tree, a similar block bore a human skull, and on the surface of the wood these words had been

carved by the abbess, "*huc virgo veni, virgo mœsta veni—hic umbræ, fontes, pax.*"

The gloom, quiet, and repose of this spot, over which the darkening shades of an autumnal twilight began to gather, were grateful to the harassed spirit of Genevieve: she moved slowly and in silence among the trees, with eyes upturned, watching the decreasing light as it gleamed between their branches; and it was not till she reached the termination of the walk, that she perceived the abbess seated and gazing upwards, while the tears came slowly down her pale cheek. Genevieve was retreating, with a timid apology for her intrusion, when the abbess caught her arm, and with silent emphatic gesture detained her. Genevieve, conscious of the difference of their creeds, and fearful of some proof of fruitless zeal, was again attempting to retire, when the abbess, pointing to her cell, signified her wish that Genevieve should follow her thither; she obeyed, and, on their entering it, the abbess closed the door, and gazed on her for some moments in silence; at length, "Thou lovest," she said. Genevieve was silent.—The abbess pointed emphatically to her own pale cheek and wasted figure, "Behold," she said, "the fate of her who loves." And in the long and melancholy conversation that followed, she eloquently painted the progress of that disastrous passion which bestowed on its victims immortality and wretchedness. At its close she read to Genevieve part of a letter she had been writing, and of which every page was blotted with her tears.

'Deum testem invoco, si Augustus universum præsidens mundum, matrimonii honore dignaretur, totumque mihi orbem confirmaret in perpetuo præsidendum, charius mihi ac dignius videretur, tua dici amica,* quàm illius imperatrix.'—"Go, maiden," she said, after reading these words, "and when thou

* The original expression is somewhat stronger. Vide Rankin's History of France, vol. iii.

too weepest thy hopeless love, remember the abbess Eloise, and the convent of the Paraclete." She closed the scroll, and she and her hearer remained mute for some moments, the one from remembered, the other from existing associations. They started mutually at a sound seldom heard within those walls till of late, a knocking at the gate; the ancient portress tottered into the chamber. "Who is he that would seek us?"—"He calls himself the Monk of Montcalm," said the portress, "and he saith he hath heavy tidings to utter."—"He is a gracious and a holy man," said the abbess; "say we will see him on the instant."—"Stay thee, maiden," she added to Genevieve, as the sandals of the aged monk were heard in the passage to the apartment of the abbess. His pale, ascetic, almost spiritualized form appeared at the low and narrow door of the chamber. The abbess rose as the portress held a dim light beneath the pointed arch of the door, and the conventual salutation of *Benedicite*, and *Pax vobiscum*, passed between them. "Reverend mother," said the monk, "I am the bearer of tidings which, even in these times of woe and fear, lack parallel."—"Such tidings," said the abbess, "ever visit the abode of grief—the messenger knows his way, and chooses his fittest sojourn. But what are thy tidings, holy monk?—It were a mournful pleasure if an exhausted source could feel its streams flow once more. I fear me there was but one hand that could touch their spring—and that—opened them once, and then they closed for ever."—"Reverend dame," said the monk, hasting to deliver his mission, "I have journeyed to tell thee that, on to-morrow's night the monks of holy St. John, of Beaucaire, will sing a mass in the church of Paraclete, for the soul of the lady Isabelle of Courtenaye, who was murdered on her bridal night by a hand unknown;—but not," he added, shuddering, "unsuspected."

The abbess Eloise sat silent and horror-struck at the tidings. "Where was the bridegroom?" she

said at length. The monk crossed himself, and shuddered.—"Her uncle—her kinsmen—her wooers?" repeated Eloise. The monk prepared to answer; and as he stood before the abbess, who was seated, and had placed the lamp far behind her, so that only her features and form were visible in dark profile, while the light fell full on the pale features, naked feet, and withered hands of the ascetic, which were clasped on the staff he leant on—the dark drapery that shrouded his form, all invisible in that dim light—they appeared to Genevieve like a being from the world of spirits, disclosing its secrets to a summoning prophetess. "The dark and bloody house of Courtenaye," he said, "hath achieved its dark and bloody destiny:—its wars and wrongs and ravages have met their fearful consummation. Thou knowest, reverend mother, the crimes of that house of blood, and thou mayest, perchance, have heard the dark prophecy of that Marie de Mortemar, who had undergone such wrong from them and their brothers in arms, as Christian land never witnessed, and Christian tongue cannot utter."—"I have heard report," said the abbess, "that the fiery arrow should pierce through the towers of Courtenaye, but I knew not, or regarded the import of these dark words."—"They have been fulfilled," said the monk. "The arrow hath prostrated the castle to its foundation-stone. There was not a noble maid in all France wooed far and near like the lady of Courtenaye: but she rejected all in the pride of her beauty, till among the Crusaders there arrived at her castle a stranger, whom men called Sir Paladour de la Croix Sanglante. No one knew his birth, his kindred, or descent; but there went a hushed and mysterious whisper through the castle that *he* was that visionary being—that spectre bridegroom who came to fulfil the fearful prophecy. If he were such, never did Satan, since his fall, clothe himself more like an angel of light. I need not tell thee of the glorious beauty of that faultless form," he said; "such image

should never visit the fancy of a holy recluse."—"Thou needest not," said the abbess; then averting her head, she murmured,—"Such vision too oft haunts her dreams." "There was somewhat superhuman," said the monk, "not only in his form, but in his deeds.—With more than mortal might he confronted the Count de Monfort in the lists in rescue of the lady Isabelle's lands and person from the claim of King Philip—with more than mortal might he contended in that fierce and fruitless battle which the crusading knights fought with the army of the Count of Toulouse, at the mad instigation of Simon de Monfort—with more than mortal arm did he strive with the bold outlaw named L'Aigle sur la Roche. The attendants of the lady said that an unearthly figure aided him there, and struck a dagger into the outlaw's heart. How it chanced I cannot tell: the tale was rife in the months of the vassals when the lady returned in safety; and she would prove her love to him who had saved her from both, and would wed him and make him lord of her wide lands and countless dower. The Lord of Courtenaye consented. I joined their hands, but I swear to thee, reverend mother, as I uttered the holy words of the sacrament of marriage, I deemed that I joined the hand of a marble statue to that of the bride; and never from statue or portrait glared eyes so fixed and lifeless as those of Sir Paladour. And, on the bridal night, when some late revellers still loitered in the hall, there was heard a cry like that once heard in Egypt on her night of doom. At the voice of that cry the revellers started from their feast, and hasted to the nuptial chamber; but death had been already there—the bride lay a corse on the bridal bed, her bosom streaming with blood. No mortal weapon was in that chamber of death. The bridegroom had departed, and, ere the cry of horror had well ceased, cries louder and louder issued from a lower apartment from the closed door of which flames and shrieks came bursting forth together. We hast-

ened thither, and there was a scene, such as never was wrought by those profane players in their painted passions and tragical horrors. Smoke and sparks issued from the door of the chamber, and its wretched inmate was shrieking that he burned!—he burned!—it was known or imagined on what task he was employed; and that those who may not be named within these walls were his associates in his unutterable work. The door was fast—the key lost—men wrought with axe and crow, and the roof and ceiling was broken up, and water poured on the flames; but below, as the waters hissed and sunk on the embers of the burning chamber, mine eyes beheld all the awful implements of that dread and accursed work—the inverted cross, the seething cauldron, the triangular stone with its ghastly central gleam, magic-wrought, and magic-bright, and blazing 'mid all that conflagration; the abused relics of the dead, skull and bone disposed in mockery, flames of every colour, and the horrid crisped lumps of ashes, which had been but a few moments past the agents in that work. Whether the flames that consumed them burst from the unholy ingredients of their employ, or were kindled by the dark and fiery spirits who are mantled in them, in their unfathomable dwellings of torment and of flame, it were alike impossible to tell and fearful to conjecture." The monk paused; he dared not tell that he himself had seen a hellish form spring from beneath, seize the lord of Courtenaye, and plunge him yelling amid the flames that closed round them both for ever.

At the end of this awful communication, the abbess, the monk, and Genevieve, remained in deep silence. There is a species of horror attached to certain narratives, which, while it repels belief, forces conviction. In such divided state of mind, though from various causes, sat the party for one fearful and silent hour. "Holy monk," said the abbess, at length breaking silence, "wilt thou not partake of such humble refection as our cloister can offer?"—"I have

tasted bread and water thrice this day," said the pale ascetic skeleton; "more than enough for a mortal frame, that would not be bowed down by carnal heaviness and pampered sloth. The spirit's burthen is enough; let us not add to it the weight of earthly indulgence to damp the pinion, whose overburthened flight will never soar heaven-ward." "There may be a heavier burthen on its wings," sighed the abbess, as the monk retired to pace his way to the monastery of Beaucaire. "Now part we," she said to Genevieve.—"Nay, let me watch with thee, reverend lady," said Genevieve; "though I must not mingle prayer with thee, perchance mine aspirations may not pollute the incense of the sacrifice?"—"It may not be so," said Eloise. "Order must be taken in the convent for the celebration of this bridal hymn—this sepulchral dirge, I would say. Alas!" she added, raising her eyes with an expression of wild and profound melancholy, "how many wandering thoughts beset me!"—then suddenly, as talking to herself, "*She* died blessedly by the hand of him she loved,—a single deep-dealt blow.—She had not to linger for the heart-gnawing, cold, slow, sedentary murderer, Grief."

As she spoke, she summoned a lay-sister, to give order for the ceremony of the night, and Genevieve retired to her cell. She felt her need of profound rest to prepare her for her early setting forth with the queen on her journey, but she knew not that an exhausted frame and an excited mind are the most inveterate foes to that rest which both require. She prayed fervently, and slept soon, but not without seeing, amid her devotions, and even after she had closed her eyes, the pale form of the victim-bride in every corner of her narrow chamber. The visions that thus disturbed her waking thoughts held increased power over her slumbers, and in her dreams she thought she was traversing a dark and dreary mountain-path, at the extremity of which a light was twinkling. This melancholy reminiscence of her

former existence seemed like a renewal of it, and she wept as she had done in her infant wanderings, weariness, and peril. Suddenly she was alone—all her companions appeared to have left her. She dreamed that she approached the light alone—it gleamed from a hole in a hovel. She asked for admittance, and a hoarse voice answered, "We are watching our dead." She was at last admitted, and saw the corse of a man extended on a bed, and a woman watching beside it, whose face was concealed. In a short time, the woman retired, and the corse rose upright, not at once, or suddenly, but slowly and deliberately. It rose, quitted the bed, and beckoned Genevieve to follow. She followed, in her dream, till they reached a church-yard, where the ghastly figure beckoned her onwards; she shuddered, and retreated: at that moment, he half unfolded his shroud, as if in token of invitation. She retreated faster; and the scene suddenly changed to a splendid hall, such as her late conversations with the queen had painted in vivid colours on her imagination. The board was spread with dainties, and surrounded by nobles and beauties gorgeously attired. At the head of the board sat Sir Amirald, and beside him was placed an empty chair. He looked pale and abstracted; but in a moment, as he beheld Genevieve, his features were flushed with the glow of passion and joy, and he sprang forward, to lead her to the vacant seat.—At that moment, her late fearful companion appeared close by her side, and seized her hand, exclaiming, "Since you will not come to meet me, I have come to meet you."—As the vision spoke, the shroud disappeared from its form and features, and she beheld the corse, for so it seemed, of Amand. The touch of his hand at first seemed to burn like fire—then it became colder than ice.—She shrieked, and awoke. It was not for some time that she recovered her recollection, and, when she did, the objects by which she was surrounded made her almost doubt the evidence of her senses. She found herself in an apart-

ment of the convent larger than she had yet beheld; some rude figures of stone, ranged in niches along the walls, and some still ruder atempts at ornament, in the roof, were dimly descried by the light of two torches of black wax, that burned before a painting obscure and hardly seen; opposite to her was a hearse, with small black banners at each corner, and covered with a pall of black, on which was wrought a silver crucifix. Her eyes at length rested on an altar, from which the usual decorations of flowers, vases, and embroidery, were removed, and which displayed only a crucifix of wood as black as ebony. After gazing long on these objects, her perceptions began to return, and she comprehended her situation. She was in the church of the Paraclete, furnished as it was for the masses to be said for the soul of the lady Isabelle, and she at once conceived that she must have wandered there in her sleep, a habit which the broken and fearful slumbers of her childhood had induced, and which had probably been renewed by the terror and intensity of the images that had troubled her dreams that night. She arose, and looked round her, but no longer with terror. A profound melancholy, mingled with grief and awe, pervaded her heart as she beheld these memorials of faded loveliness and prostrate pride. From the conversation of Eloise and the monk, she had learned, that that "lady of the cave," whom she encountered in her solitary wanderings, and whose beauty and splendid garb had, amid such a scene, made her appear like a queen of Faerie, was that lady Isabelle, whose surpassing beauty she had beheld—whose obsequies she now witnessed. "And art thou she?" Genevieve exclaimed,—"art thou she who didst pass all the daughters of men in beauty; who sattest in thy pride of life so far above me, that I deemed it almost an insult to grasp thy garment's hem; yet, to-night I might, unchidden, touch thy shroud? Oh! how glorious wast thou in thy loveliness! Yet thou *hast perished*; and yet I love to linger on the image

of what thou wast—so beautiful, proud, and yet gentle:—there was a trembling loveliness about thee in thy haughtiest mood and moment; and, when thou seemedst to offer protection to me, it was as if thou seemedst to supplicate for thyself." Her eyes again were fastened on the hearse with its banners and blazon. She shuddered and murmured—"And what avails this pageantry of death? and oh, what availed the pageantry of thy bridal, when nobles held thy rein, and their daughters bore thy train? And that being, not of this world, flashing the light of his demon eyes on thee, and fixing in thy bosom the fangs of murder!"

She cast back one involuntary glance on the hearse as she retired—a spectacle was there that nailed her to the spot where she stood, and froze the blood in her veins.—The figure of the departed stood by the hearse, in form, stature, attitude, as in life; but not in hue or expression resembling aught that is mortal:—it was folded in a shroud:—what seemed its arms, were clasped across its bosom; and, though the face was visible, the colourless and moveless features brought to the memory of Genevieve such recollection of the living as her image wrought in marble would. Beauty was there; but it was a beauty "not of this world"—the eyes alone seemed gleaming with intense and supernatural light; but they appeared fixed like lamps in sockets of stone. So she stood, pale in immortal beauty—blending the associations of divided worlds, bearing the character of all that is sad in the present, all that is awful in the future. Genevieve's first impulse was to fly; but her feet seemed rooted like those of the apparition; and she stood struggling, but unable to move, as sufferers feel under the influence of the nightmare. Then came slowly on her that unutterable sensation which those feel who believe themselves in the presence of an inhabitant of the other world—a sensation which almost assimilates them to the awful being on whom they gaze, in rigidity, coldness,

and immobility. The hair of her flesh stood up—every pore tingled with distinct vitality—her eyes became, to her own perception, glazed, though she retained the full power of vision; the next moment they were dilated beyond her power of closing them; the figure appeared expanding in dimensions, and advancing on her. The murmur that at first crept through her cold ears, increased to the rustling of many waters—the air became tremulous with a purple light; her abortive attempt to shriek, felt like hands grasping her throat. The paroxysm of horror suspended her faculties—her whole body contracted, and she fell senseless on the pavement.

CHAPTER VIII.

——We cannot disjoin wedlock,
'Tis of heaven's fastening: well may we raise jars,
Jealousies, strifes, heartburning disagreements,
Like a thick scurf o'er life, as did our master
Upon that patient miracle.
MIDDLETON'S *Witches.*

THE bridal of Sir Paladour de la Croix Sanglante and the Lady Isabelle, was held with a magnificence suitable to the state and wealth of the bride, and the merit and valour of the bridegroom. After the marriage ceremony, performed by the Monk of Montcalm, there was a gorgeous feast; and then the company assembled in the hall of the castle to dance, the bride and bridegroom, according to the custom of the times and of many following, being the leaders in the ball. The feudal hall presented a rude and grand consistency:—the fire supplied with vast blocks went roaring and blazing up the wide and grateless chimney; the chimney-piece, a noble work of antique art, adorned with rich sculptures in wood of men and

animals, demons and saints, fruits and foliage, heraldic emblems and sentences from Scripture, wrought with rich and fantastic luxuriance of ornament, rose like a monument to the height of thirty feet; its stories (as they might be called), with their entablatures and flourishments, tapering as they ascended, till the topmost carving almost touched the cornice of the hall, loaded like it with heavy, fantastic, but most rich sculpturing in wood "all made out of the carver's brain." There was not, perhaps, a right angle in the walls of the apartment; but, of its polygon figure, every pannel was either hung with rich tapestry, or framed of wood so polished and wrought, that the eye turned with delight from gold and gaudy figures, to repose on the dark hue and strong relief of the alternate compartment.

A "liveried army" of domestics, stationed in recesses, held waxen torches, whose light, like banners in a field, streamed forward or backward with the movements of the dancers and the impulse with which they swayed the air; and those movements so stately, yet so expressive—the sweeping robes of the ladies, the gentle tread of the knights, the sonorous rustle of the long-depending garments on the inlaid floor, from which the rushes had here and there been swept, mingled with the clank of the small spurs which their partners wore even on that occasion, made meet accompaniment to the strains of the minstrels; who leaned from their carved and gilded gallery amid the pillars of the lordly hall, to witness that luxury of motion which they participated while they inspired. And the vast uncurtained window, on whose gorgeous and emblazoned panes the admitted moon shed her full light, tinting them with purple, vermillion, and gold, and then resting in pale and placid glory on some uncoloured pane, seemed to make heaven a joyous witness of that festival: and within the deep recesses of those windows, on high-piled and costly cushions, sank beauty, panting from the delicious exercise of the dance; while youthful

knights, "all on the wanton rushes laid them down," and pointing to the felicity of Paladour and Isabelle, did then most effectively plead for the completion of their own: while, through the low-arched doors that opened in sundry directions, was often caught, by the light of iron cressets, or the flash of torches borne by passing domestics, the sight of the menials of the household dancing in groups, to strains more homely, and with steps less graceful, but with hearts as light as any in that gay assembly.

The Lord of Courtenaye, seated in his chair of state, whispered courteous words to every lady as she passed him in the dance. The Monk of Montcalm, seated at a small trivet, furnished with a bason of holy water, with which he was to sprinkle the bridal-bed that night, was conning over his night-spells and benisons for the prosperity of the wedded pair: beside him stood the lord's falconer, with a hawk on his wrist, hooded to quell her screams; and the Lady Isabelle's huntsman held a pair of snow-white hounds in a leash of gold tissue, broidered with names of the bride and bridegroom; and the all-licensed fool made jests on the allusion, and shook every bell in his cap in chorus to his own drollery, and joyous burthen was borne by the laugh of all the domestics, who that night were not reproved for their mirth by their lord. He was engaged with other thought, for ever as he glanced towards the Monk of Montcalm he muttered,—"thou art the master of a powerless spell: they whom I rule have forespoken thee already."

The bride had danced one round, and was seated in her chair of state, arrayed in cloth of silver, and a transparent veil falling over her lovely brow, as if to hide her from the gaze of the throng.—"It is she," they said, "for whom Sir Paladour de la Croix Sanglante challenged and overthrew Simon de Monfort —him whom fifty lances had not shaken in his saddle-seat in the lists that day It is she for whom he *undertook* and accomplished the adventure against

l'Aigle sur la Roche, who never released prisoner ransomless before."—"And right worthy," cried the knights, "was she of such valour."—"And as worthy," rejoined the ladies, "he of his reward." As they spoke, Sir Paladour, taking a torch from one of the attendants, offered his hand to the lady for another round. "I challenge this fair prisoner," said he, pressing the hand she gave, "by the golden fetters in which I bound it to-day;" and he glanced with gay triumph on the marriage ring.—"That were easy," said the smiling bride: "but, oh, thou subtle enthraller! where didst thou learn to bind the heart in such fine fetters, that it cannot choose but quit its home to dwell with thee, and delight itself to dwell in such sweet prison ever?"—"There is no shrine on earth," said the impassioned bridegroom, "worthy of gem so rich. To look on thee, to listen to thee, to touch thy hand, are several such delights, that it were worth life's dearest peril to win but one of them; but to think all these, and thyself the sum of all, are mine, wraps me in too exquisite a trance; and I fear," he added, darting on her eyes, under whose vivid and melting brilliancy her own sunk, "I fear I shall lose all consciousness of my felicity from its very excess."

At this moment a page approaching touched his mantle, and whispered some words in his ear.—"Go, boy," he said slightingly, "this is no hour for such importunacy; and he led the lady as he spoke. The boy drew nearer and put a ring into his hand;—the glow that all that night had made his cheek seem like a living rose, left it in a moment as pale as that of the dead! He uttered some inarticulate sounds; and then, whispering his bride he would return on the instant, he hurried from the hall. As he crossed the threshold, he flung one unmarked look of agony in the direction where she stood, and disappeared. The lady, who had been employed in lifting and arranging her veil for the dance, heard his words, but saw not his expression; and, re-seating herself to await his return, began to enter into gay talk with her atten-

dants. Suddenly she paused—"Do I see between sleep and waking?" she said, bending forward, "or is that my lord? Methinks he looks wondrous wan."

Sir Paladour was seen leaning against the doorway, looking like any thing but a happy bridegroom. The gaiety of the festal was now on the decline; the cry through the hall was, "It waxes late—the torches burn to bedward." At the word, the Lord of Courtenaye rose from his chair, and six pages, arrayed in white, detached themselves from the dance, and seized torches to escort the bridegroom. This movement, though it did not disturb the dancers, caused some tumult and press around the doorway, while all waited for the train of ladies who were first to escort the bride to her apartment. Sir Paladour stood like a statue amid the bridesmen, amongst whom some pleasantries suited to those coarse but merry times were passing, when Verac exclaimed, "Hold thy torch aloft, boy! By Heaven, Sir Paladour, thy cheek is as wan as that of the dead!"—"And is no cheek here but mine pale?" said Paladour: "methinks thine is pale, too, Verac, and thine, Semonville." "The torches burn wondrous dim," said many voices: the pages trimmed them in vain. A blue pallid light diffused itself through the hall, and the flushed cheek of panting beauty paused from the dance, and the young ruddy aspects of the gazing pages were tinged with that pale and ghastly hue at the same moment; while, amid the vapour, the cressets and lamps waned in light like moons in their eclipse. The darkness increased, and the Lord of Courtenaye, however he might hail the signal, called aloud for fresh torches. The order was obeyed, but the torches they produced, lighted from those whose flame was so strangely colored, had a tint of the same pale and portentous light.

At length the hall was cleared; the only individuals left were the Lord of Courtenaye and Thibaud: the former showed some impatience of this officious

surveillance of his vassal—"Why art thou here?" he said.—"Because," said the vassal, "I see thine eye is fixed, and thy step pointed toward thy chamber of crime and darkness; when in such emergency didst thou say, 'why art thou here?'"—"I lack not thy counsel, nor thy aid," said his Lord: "begone, and trouble me not."—"Thus says a sorcerer to an imp who can no longer serve him," said Thibaud; "yet mark me, lord," and with cold hand and visage pale, he approached the Lord of Courtenaye, and grasped his shrinking shoulder—"mark me, we met in mirth and wine to confer on thy brother's murder—let that pass. I meant not thou shouldst gnash and grin like a wolf at the memory.—Let us not part in sadness: we must drain cups to deep pledges ere we part," and he filled a vast cup to the brim.—"God rid me of thee, thou insolent knave!" said his lord.—"What sayest thou, lord of Courtenaye," quoth Thibaud, reeling, but holding the cup straight, "deem'st thou I am carousing to the bridal?—No; I will name a health in which thou shalt pledge me in thy soul—if thou hast one. Here is to the consummation of thy evil purposes!" and he attempted to drain the cup in vain. "Here is," he cried faintly, holding it to his lips, "here is to the fiend and thee!" Then after a deeper draught, "Here—here is to that daughter of Satan that weds the Lord of Courtenaye to-night in the vaults of his castle, and I shall be the bridesman in flames," he repeated, draining the cup, "flames in my throat—in my brain—in my heart. Am I not thy meet bridesman, Lord of Courtenaye?" and he fell prostrate on the floor, dashing in his fall the cup far from him.

"Insensate, intoxicated brute!" said the Lord of Courtenaye, hasting from the hall, "and at such a time!" And, as he raised the tapestry which led to the passage communicating with his secret closet, the prostrate wretch, raising his inflamed visage and blood-shot eyes, like the face of a demon, once more

exclaimed, "flames—flames—in throat and brain; but not in soul like thee, false, fiendish lord!"

The Lord of Courtenaye stayed not to listen to his ravings: he hastened to his secret chamber, in the spirit of him who said, "Evil, be thou my good." The terrible implements of the vault had all been removed thither; there was the necromantic altar-block of stone, supporting a seething caldron, the triangular stone of black marble, on whose dark and polished surface a light gleamed and disappeared successively, as the flame of the caldron blazed and sank—that flame was of the deepest blue; there was no light in the chamber or closet, but that which issued from the caldron.

The light thus singularly diffused, fell on as singular a group. Three female forms, withered, haggard, and decrepid, were gathered round it. They were the same who had before been assembled in the vault. One of them, kneeling, held open a parchment volume, on which characters were inscribed in red and black alternately. Right opposite, another hag was seated on her hams, her elbows resting on her knees, and her withered knuckles locked in her jaws, while her livid eyes and visage were now partially and ghastlily seen by the light of the caldron, and then, as the gleam subsided, lost in darkness. The third, crouching close to the caldron, flung in some ingredients, and zealously pursued her task of stirring the mixture. She was placed in such a position with regard to the light, that her figure was indefinable—her action only visible, as her dark arm crossed the flame from time to time.

"And, thinkest thou," said she who pored over the parchment leaves—"thinkest thou she will fulfil her promise to-night? and that she will show to him that which she hath promised?"—"Doubt it not," said the other, without unlocking her contact of jaw and knuckle. "Did she not bring us first acquainted with the evil one? And if all be true, the Lord of Courtenaye is meeter mate for him than we."—"It

glads me," said the inferior agent, who stirred the caldron, " to see our mistress when she is wrought by the passions of others, being passionless herself, to do or to promise that which passes earthly power. Then I feel she has a look that may command the fiend —I feel that my master may be my slave, if I had eye and voice and step like——Oh, she is awful in her moment of power!"—" Awful she is," said the other, " but awful though she be, she favours much one whom I remember fair in her youth. I was fair myself—men told me so; but age, and want, and the wish of revenge without the power, have brought me to what I am."—" But who was she?" said her hearers eagerly.—" Put in more night-shade and wolfsbane, and see that the flame wane not."—" Tell us whom doth our mistress resemble?"—" Even Marie de Mortemar," said the crone.—" And who was she?" said the reader of the parchment, dropping the scroll.—" She was a noble, beautiful lady, heiress of Mortemar; and methinks even yet our pale mistress hath her falcon eye, her glorious port, her thrilling voice; but it fared ill with her.—She was a heretic; and worse, she would be a preacher —a prophetess—she would be the *Virgin* of the Albigenses. Her touch healed the sick—her prayer suspended the avalanche in its fall—her word raised the dead. She was one, as I have heard, who could make a heaven, herself being sole goddess; or turn that heaven to hell. But lo, in the height of her spiritual pride, there came against her Count Raymond, then sworn brother to the Lord of Courtenaye, the brother of him whose hests we do, and the Bishop of Toulouse, and they despoiled her of lands and power, and burnt her castles, and made of her people serfs, and misused her in such sort, that she wandered a maniac for a time, and then was heard of no more." —" And fate too good for her," said she who stirred the caldron. " Was she not a heretic? I thank kind stars," she muttered, pursuing her task—" I thank kind stars, for holier name must not be uttered here,

that, witch as I am, I never was heretic, else may these flames I am stirring consume me."—"And how," said the mocking hag who spoke last,—"how deemest thou thy lot better, being a witch?"—"Because," said the other, in the dreaming darkness of her intoxicated existence, "I know not well whether I be witch or no. I am as one between the living world and that which lives not.—Sometimes I think all a dream, and other time I think all reality, and often I know not what to think. I was promised wealth, and power, and youth, yet am I poor, and powerless, and withered. I banquet at gay feasts, and wake famished. I see stores of gold, and do the drudgery of a devil for a liard."

"Hast thou had no hours of dark power and fearful pleasure, when we have drained the cup our mistress deals to us, and anointed us with that ointment she mixes?" said her companion, trying to fortify her own incredulity by the extorted confession of the other. "Have we not had brave nights, high visions, rare pleasures? Was it a dream that night when we danced round the tree, where hung the bodies of the vassals of the Lord of Courtenaye, whom he slew in his mood for saying that he knew better how to feast the Crusaders, than to lead them; and ever as we danced we rent a rag or gnawed a muscle till they descended and joined us, the fetters clanking round the fleshless bones making meet time to our measure? Who our dark minstrel was, thou sawest thyself."

"And what was that," said the other, in fiendish emulation—"what was that to the night we feasted in the ruined church interdicted for murder long since done, and in which the children of the Count of Toulouse sought sanctuary in vain? I, for thou wast not there, dug with these nails the body of a span-long unchristened brat from the grave where the mother, a leman of the Bishop of Toulouse, had smothered it in earth. Flags of the aisle were our table, and strange were the dainties heaped on them; but that which pleased our master best was

the——Hush! let us stir the caldron: the flame waxeth pale, and it must be the hue of the rose, ere the charm be perfect. Hark!" she exclaimed, "hark!" and "hark again!" was repeated by her companions, as a sound of unutterable horror ascended from the floor on which they stood. "Is it our master?" said the hags, crouching close to each other. "Who are ye?" said a feeble voice,—"who are ye, the sound of whose voices I hear above me?—"We are the daughters of evil!" said the elder hag, "met to do our father's will."—"And fitter spot ye might not choose," said the voice; "but if ye be human, list to me, though ye may not aid me."—"And who art thou that criest on us so?" said the hags, bending their ears to the floor.—"I am Vidal the minstrel!" said a feeble voice: "I have been plunged by the craft and crime of the Lord of Courtenaye in this dungeon, because my memory bore traces that are now effaced. Here have they held me in misery; but they fed me at least till within the last two days. From thence I have not tasted food, and that I should lightly regard; all I crave is one draught of water! water! and I die content." The hags, from the deepest experience of human wretchedness, combined with the most craving excitement of the imagination, were as unmoved by the horrors they heard as by those they were about to prepare, and they would have mocked the gasping petitioner, had not one appeared among them, who in a moment chained up every tongue in terror.

It was the Lord of Courtenaye, who entering the closet locked the door behind him, and then fiercely turning to the group demanded—"Where is *she?*"—"She will be here anon," answered the beldames; "and meanwhile we lack no implements for our task."—"To it, then, and suddenly, and successfully," said the Lord of Courtenaye: "or ye shall welter and roar in the caldron ye are lighting! To your gear and quickly, ye hags. So sure as I fling down this key from my hand," and he dropped it into the

seething caldron, "so surely shall ye never quit your task till it be fulfilled."—"She will be here anon—doubt it not," said the terrified hags.—"I neither doubt nor believe, nor think nor feel," said the furious lord: "on with your task! The night wanes, and the fiery arrow is already drawn to the head—the heavens are dark—the astrologer reads the stars no more. What light I may now catch must flash on me from the abysses of that downward world, of whose entrance ye are meet portresses." Two of the wretched women then linked themselves hand in hand, while the third recited aloud from her parchment. As they hopped and hobbled their witch-dance round the caldron, one of them repeated incessantly, *hurr*, *hurr*, *hurr*, *harr*, *hus*, *hus*; at every sound striking her staff stronger on the floor, while her voice rose to a shriek, and the other uttered the imagined potent sounds *Dies*, *dies jesquet benedoefet*, *douvima*, *enitemaus*. The arch-witch, meanwhile stirred the caldron, and read fast and loud from that bloody scroll.* Suddenly the blaze of the caldron tapered upward, gleamed, and expired. "By hell!" said the Lord of Courtenaye, "ye mock me with some device." The hags wearily pursued their magic dance, and the caldron blazed again. "Of what hue must the flame be," said the Lord of Courtenaye, "ere her promise be fulfilled?"—"The hue of the blood-red wine, or of the warrior's heart-drops," answered the witches.—"And know ye not, hags, a spell to make the flame change its hue from that pale infernal blue to crimson? Hark ye! raise the flame to its right and ruddy hue, or by hell I will stir the caldron with your withered carcases!"

The terrified hags renewed their "toil and trouble:" and the fierce and fiend-like visage of the Lord of Courtenaye was bent more eagerly on the blaze. The hags crouched breathless beside it. "I have got an ingredient of power," said one of them; "but

* Vide Delrio, Wierus, Glanville, or Ben Jonson's very poetical mask of Queens.

our mistress charged me not to use it, save in her presence."—"Use it now," said the Lord of Courtenaye, "plunge it in, or thou thyself shalt plunge in that caldron!" Thus urged, the wretched woman flung the ingredient with which the mistress of the spell had furnished her into the caldron. It was a chemical preparation of singular power. The moment it was dropped into the caldron, the flame sank and all was darkness for a moment. The next it blazed up to the height of the ceiling, caught fierce and instant hold of the rafters, and next of the cloth with which the apartment was hung. And in a few moments every compartment of the chamber was on flame, and the light of the caldron extinguished in that of blazing roof, tapestry, and furniture.

The first effort of the Lord of Courtenaye was to recover the key which in his passion he had flung into the caldron. But its contents were boiling like molten lead, and with a shriek of agony he withdrew his arm. His next was to call on his wretched associates to assist in extinguishing the flames; but all the materials were combustible, and their threadbare rags, which they tore off to stifle the flames, burned like tinder in a moment. His last impulse was to rush to the door, and thunder at it with hand and foot, uttering all the time yells of fierce and and fearful agony. The chamber was remote from the haunt of domestics. He redoubled his cries: but, meanwhile, the flames had increased, the tapestry was consumed, the roof was in a flame over their heads, and blazing fragments began to drop on the floor. The cloth that hung before the warrior's portrait, consumed to ashes, crumbled away, and the figure painted on copper, and resisting the force of the flames, stood out strongly in the horrid light, as if a living and present being glared on the fearful doom of his foe.

At this moment, the wretched hags, maddened by the increasing flames, yet retaining some witch-like *associations*, excited by the crimson blaze, began

once more their ghastly reel about the caldron, whose overboiling flames caught their garments in a moment. They blazed yet still they staggered in that wild dance, and shrieked their spells as the fire reached their flesh. Then all at once they seized hold of the Lord of Courtenaye. Loud as his cries were, they were drowned by louder cries without. A hundred voices shouted—"Where is the Lord of Courtenaye?—Where?" and a hundred footsteps were heard above in the stoned-paved galleries.—"Here—here!" said their lord, whose horror of his dreadful death overcame his fear of being discovered with such associates in such employment. "I burn—I burn;—unless aid be given presently. The key is lost—use axe and crow—break ope the door—break ope the door!" he cried, turning his feeble fingers round the massive lock.

"Then mischief hath done its masterpiece, and it is hell's very holiday!" exclaimed a voice without. "The lady Isabelle lies slaughtered in the bridal-bed; and none can trace the assassin!"—"What tellest thou me of the Lady Isabelle!" said the Lord of Courtenaye: "I tell thee, slave, I burn!" The volumes of smoke now came bursting from beneath the door, and through the apertures of the walls. In a moment crows and axes, and all the implements for forcing a way, were thundering against the door; while another party, ascending by a stair the landing place of which was on the roof of that closet, tore it up, with pick-axe and all implements at hand; and others toiled to drag up the stair vessels of water to pour on the flame. The din was horrible; the dying screams of the hags, two of whom were suffocated by the flames, the last dancing and blazing in a paroxysm of fury-like inebriation, till she fell—the cries of the Lord of Courtenaye, who held fast hold of the door, shrieking at every blow dealt on it—the clash and batter on the roof of the chamber—the roar of the suppressed flames—the clamour of attendants, made the scene almost infernal. It

was in vain the strength of the [illegible] tried on the iron-plated door; [illegible] in vain. Above the toil was more successful: the beams were rent asunder, the rafters laid bare, [illegible] of water poured on the flames, and, reaching through the fractures of the ceiling, they heard their lord exclaim, "Oh for one drop of the water that I have denied the thirsty mendicant at my castle-gate!—one drop!"—"One drop," echoed a voice which none heard but he. The same exclamation was uttered, and at the same moment, by the lord of the castle and the victim of the dungeon. At that moment the floor gave way and went crashing and blazing into the vault below. "Fling down ropes, since the door will not yield," cried a hundred voices, as the shrieking lord clung to the posts of the door, the scorching fragments of the floor being his only standing-place. "Come heaven or hell," said Thibaud, whom frantic intoxication bent over the shattered roof among the rest, "the Lord of Courtenaye shall not perish alone: be his doom what it will, I will partake it." And, spite of the resistance, he dashed himself from the crater, as it might be termed, into the gulph below. The impulse of his fall shattered and bore down the single plank on which the Lord of Courtenaye stood. They plunged together amid smoke and flame; but amid both arose another form, whose yell and grasp, hideousness and fierceness, justified the terrible construction put on its appearance. Out with thy beads, Monk of Montcalm," cried all: "save—save him if thou canst! The fiend hath risen in flames to seize him!—how he grapples!—how he writhes!—how he gnashes!—the fiend is stronger! Holy Mary!—Did ever human eyes see such sight!—The fiend hath him—he plunges him into the flames.—Tell thy beads faster, monk. Holy monk, save his soul, if not his body!—He rises—he shrieks—he sinks—he is lost!" all exclaimed, as the Lord of Courtenaye disappeared, sinking into that vault of flame and darkness with

the ghastly shape that seized him. It was indeed Vidal, the prisoner of the dungeon, who, in the agonies of his dying vengeance, as the roof of his prison fell in, had seized on his tyrant lord, and dragged him down into the flames, amid which he was himself choking and expiring.

The smouldering ruins of the magic chamber fell fast into that gulph of flame. All present averted their eyes at the sight, and prayed in terror or in deprecation. A single voice thundered through that awful silence: it exclaimed, "When have my predictions failed? Said I not unto thee *thou shouldest meet my Master and thine this night?*" Those who heard had scarce time to catch the sound, or distinguish the form of the speaker; for many footsteps approached, and voices were heard to exclaim—"Foul witchery hath been wrought this night! The body of the Lady Isabelle hath disappeared; the traces of blood are in the chamber, but nowhere can her corse be found. Close all the doors, let every knight in the castle draw his brand, and look that the murderer escape not."

CHAPTER IX.

But their way
Lies through the perplex'd paths of this drear wood.
MILTON'S *Comus*.

THE Monk of Montcalm had set out on his return to Beaucaire, after doing his errand at the convent of the Paraclete. The danger to be apprehended from the wolves, which infested the forest that lay in his nearest way, induced him to adopt another and more circuitous route. While pursuing it, evening came on—a grey and misty twilight veiled every object. The way lay through a rocky road that

wound among mountains, or rather stony hills, bleak and bare. Not a sound broke on the stillness, save the echo of the solitary passenger's steps from the hollows of the hill, and the screams of the birds, which, after a few short circles in the grey and cloudy air, flew back to their retreat among the cliffs.

As the evening or rather night advanced, the clouds dispersed, and the scene around became less dreary. The path opened on a plain apparently boundless; it was covered with a soft thick sward, of which the elastic resistance to the tread made the footing delightful: the wide dome of the horizon was its only limit; the bright stars "came up above the head" of the traveller, and there was just that dubious interval between light and darkness, that, though shadowy and indistinct, cannot be termed gloomy. So profound was the silence, too, that the monk could distinctly hear his own footsteps; there was no other sound, save the whistle of the shepherds shooting across the heath, or a few notes of those simple airs by which they amused the loneliness of their pastoral life, and which, heard thus at night, (the singer too invisible,) had an expression of plaintive and soothing sweetness which they must have wanted by day: they had the effect not only of cheering the path, but the spirits, of the good monk. "Perchance," he said, "those sounds, so simple and yet sweet, may be caught by a more skilful ear than mine; and, when adorned with courtly words, and set off by some curious instrument, may yet be heard with delight in the palaces of princes.* And thus too, perhaps," he added, "the sounds that these poor Albigeois have presumed to strike on the mysterious chords of inspiration, when modulated by a truer ear and a finer touch, may be caught by futurity, and one day make music in the ear of hea-

* This idea was suggested to the writer on hearing the beautiful Irish air of Aileen Aroon, composed probably by some poor illiterate minstrel, (though tradition says otherwise,) sung in a *crowded theatre by* Madame Catalani.

ven." The plain now terminated in one of those thickets through he had to make his way, to avoid the dangers of the forest. Here, struggling through the tangled and intricate brakes, the only point of direction discoverable was a small eminence, surmounted by what, on reaching it, he discovered to be a cross of stone. He gained it, and tried to send his feeble sight far into the night. The lights that long ere this should have glimmered from the town of Beaucaire, were not visible; the humble spires of Paraclete had ceased to be so long ere twilight; and, where the sky glowed with the blaze of its brightest constellations, their lights burned in the direction of the far-distant towers of Courtenaye, so late the seat of beauty, valour, and festivity; now dark, deserted, and suggesting only images of fearful and mysterious calamity.

At this moment he saw a light at a small distance, slowly but distinctly approaching him. It paused, and then he thought he could distinguish a group of figures; but all was dim, shadowy, and uncertain. The Monk of Montcalm, however, sure that human beings were near, hasted from the eminence to implore their assistance; but, at the first sound of his voice, the light was extinguished and the figures became totally invisible. He struggled on—he thought he heard the low moanings of one in pain, but suppressing his cries; and, as he attempted to feel his way with extended hands, something like a human hand touched his; but the touch was so cold, that the monk withdrew his from the contact, shuddering as he did so with invincible horror. The encounter seemed, however, to brace his nerves; for, after having, with dizzy head and unconscious step, forced his way, as he imagined, but a few paces onward, he found himself on a spot which must have been a furlong from his last position. Here the brushwood was cleared away—a few dwarf trees only intercepted the view: but these stood lone and almost ghastly, waving their boughs in the night-breeze like the

arms of skeletons; their pale bark and doddered trunks making themselves visible in the dim light.

Amid this scene, cheerless, if not desolate, on a bare platform, stood a tower, large, square, and low. Around this lonely tower were the fragments of a shattered wall, amid whose angles (for it was very irregularly built) were the remains of some ruinous outbuildings. The monk paused and looked round him: terror was his first impulse; but his weariness, both mental and bodily, prevailed, and he was compelled to seat himself on a fragment of the ruined wall, while he trembled at the shelter he sought. It was the tower of Hugo, or Hugues,* in whose vicinity the boldest in that country dreaded to be after sunset. The monk was not without his share of the superstition of the age; but the purity of his conscience was a balance to the errors of his creed; and he looked on the tower, and thought of its terrible inhabitant, with fear indeed, but unmixed with a sense of danger.

As he looked upwards on the huge pile, dimly defined on the troubled sky, a small postern, that lay concealed in the darkness, was cautiously opened, and two figures issuing from it, approached him. They spoke, but their conversation was in whispers, and he could distinguish only one sentence: "It is done! and were the guerdon doubled, I would not undertake such task again." They passed on; and, dreary as the speech had been, the monk felt it was still drearier to listen to their departing tread, and watch their figures as they diminished in the darkness.

At this moment a light was distinctly seen gleaming in a loop-hole of the tower; and though this was,

* Ugo, or Hugues, was a baron of Languedoc, who favoured the Albigeois, and from whom the French protestants of a later period derived the name of Huguenots. The superstition of the age represented him as a necromancer, who, after death, continued to haunt the castle and its neighbourhood with a band of infernal associates.

in the monk's opinion, a very equivocal sign that the inmates of the tower were beings of his own species, he continued to watch with that vague hope that light always suggests in a situation so lonely, till he saw it glimmer through a narrow slit that seemed on a level with the postern. If the hand that bears that light be human, thought the monk, rising with difficulty, it will not close the door against me at such an hour. And he struck on it with his staff.—In a few moments it was opened slowly, and a figure appeared at it, bearing a light in its hand. It was tall, and enveloped so completely in dark garments, that neither form, sex, nor age was distinguishable. The eyes alone were visible; and, though they were bright and large, there was an expression in them that was not calculated to diminish the feeling its singular appearance created. The monk (in a tone that he could not prevent from faltering) told his distress as a benighted traveller, and entreating permission to enter, almost wishing now it might be denied. The figure appeared to be examining him closely: at length it replied, "Enter, if thou wilt." But these words, pronounced in a voice by which it was still impossible to judge of the speaker's sex, seemed, by the manner in which they were uttered, to imply "Enter, if you dare." The monk, anxious for something like a parley with his strange host, asked if he might be permitted to sleep that night beneath the roof. "Sleep," answered the figure in the same tone, "if thou canst." It closed the door as the monk entered, and, turning, led the way up a winding staircase of stone, rudely constructed, and much dilapidated. After ascending a few steps, it led the way through an arch of stone, without a door, into a large chamber; into the centre of which it advanced, and then stood in silence.

The monk looked round him. The apartment was rude, wild, and desolate; without furniture, and apparently without other inhabitant. The walls were of unhewn stone, and, with the arched ceiling, were

blackened by time and smoke. In the huge fire-place some embers were still burning on the hearth, shedding on the wide arch above and the rugged walls

——"A melancholy light,
The gloom of glowing embers." *

On one side was a kind of rude wooden couch, on which were spread some dark vestments; on the other side a heap of the same seemed huddled in a dark nook; on the hearth was placed a large caldron. These objects were scarce discoverable by the dim light the figure held, but were disclosed from time to time by the red and fitful glow of the fire.—The monk had time to notice these objects, for the figure had not yet spoken, but remained standing in the centre of the room. At length, pressing its hand on its brow, as if with an effort at recollection, it muttered, "Yes, he lacks food." Then turning to the monk—"Thou art with one who, unconscious of human wants, sometimes forgets that the children of the dust possess not such exemption." And, pointing to the monk to sit down on a bench of stone, it offered him some fragments of bread and a cup of water.—The monk declined the food, but drank the water, first fortifying himself with an internal ejaculatory prayer. "Perhaps thou art dainty: I have nought else to offer."—"It is my wonted—in truth, mine only fare," replied the monk; "but I am weary and o'erworn, and would willingly sleep." The figure silently pointed to a nook in which some straw was spread, and then quitted the apartment, bearing the light with it; while the monk, after praying with more than usual fervency, tried to betake himself to rest. The glare of the fire for a long time prevented him from closing his eyes; and, when at length he did so, and was sinking into rest, he was roused by a groan, not loud, but perfectly audible, issuing evidently from some one in the chamber. He half rose

* Lee's *Œdipus*.

on his elbow, and looked round him: it was not repeated, and he tried to compose himself again. But he had scarcely done so, when a second groan was heard nearer him, as if the person who uttered it was approaching.

Giving up all farther thoughts of rest, the monk now began telling his beads earnestly. But, while thus occupied, his eyes involuntarily closed from weariness; and he then thought he perceived the light, that had hitherto shone so strongly through the chamber, suddenly obscured, so as to be perceptible to his sight, though his eyes were closed. Once more he raised himself, and then saw distinctly a dark figure standing between him and the fire. Its back was turned to him; but the form was visible, and strongly defined on the light. After a few moments, it glided away, and was lost in the obscurity of the chamber.

The monk now arose, and tremblingly but solemnly adjured the vision, whether a living mortal or a disembodied spirit, to appear and reveal the cause of its restlessness and its wailings. There was no answer, but, as he advanced farther into the apartment, it appeared to him that the heap of vestments spread on the couch, which he had before observed, moved slightly. "This light deceives mine eyes, perchance," he said; "yet surely those garments seem so disposed as if a human body lay beneath them." The folds heaved palpably as he spoke. With the preternatural courage of fear, he raised part of the drapery, and saw with horror, beneath, the naked bosom of a man, from a wound in whose side the blood was still flowing. He had not strength to look at the face; he staggered some paces back, and leaned against the wall for support. At this moment the sound of steps slowly roused him, and the figure he had before beheld again entered the chamber, bearing something in its arms.

The monk did not venture to quit the spot: he stood contracting his figure and suppressing his

breath, while he watched its movements. After some uncertain gestures and vague glances round the chamber, it crouched at length before the fire, and, unfolding the burthen it held in its arms, began to drop slowly and singly its contents into the caldron. These appeared to be herbs; but there were other ingredients; and at length he perceived relics of mortality, bones and parts of a human body, mingling in the mixture. He could no longer doubt the purpose and employment of the figure: and, trembling, lest he should become in some degree a partaker of the crime by continuing to witness it, he hastened from his concealment, and called aloud on the figure to forbear. She rose, and, turning hastily towards him, dropped the mantle which enfolded her head, and disclosed the features of a face, which, but once beheld, had been forgotten never.—

> "He had awaken'd at night,
> With the dream of those ghastly eyes."*

His first impulse was to gaze on them for a moment with unmingled horror; his next, to fly from the place. "Stay me not," he cried, as she appeared attempting to detain him: "withhold me not; I know thee who thou art! Not a word, not a breath, will I exchange with thee: I know thee who thou art!"—"Know me!" she replied, in a voice in which scorn seemed to be mingled with incredulity.—"I know all!" he exclaimed; "I know thee, thy crime, and thy despair: crime that forbids mercy; despair that shuts out hope."—"Thy words—thy voice," she said, "are like those dreams that sometimes cross the dark sleep of my existence. Now the recollection rises dimly on me like a vision. Dost thou remember the lonely lake, and her who rowed the dark skiff? It was a strange meeting that—marked by doubtful question and fearful answer." "Would I did not remember!" replied the monk, crossing himself. And he recalled that night alluded to in the

* Southey's *Thalaba*.

commencement of our tale, when he had encountered this female, previously to her meeting with Sir Paladour, and after having done deep penance for the involuntary crime of listening to her dreadful secret. "Yet stay," she said, detaining him while she seemed searching her scattered recollections, "yet stay, there is a task to be done, in which thou wilt not scorn to join even with me: there is one whose wound is deep and deadly, and thou must aid me to heal it."—"Wretched woman," cried the monk, who believed she spoke of herself, "for such wound as thine there is no balm, no leech, or healing in mortal power."—"And deemest thou it was of a spirit's immortal wounds I spoke?" she said, "or sought aid or cure for them from *thee?* Then were my folly beyond even my crime. No—it was of another I spake, and, light as I hold thine aid, or that of man, the credulity (which thou wouldst call faith) of the sufferer demands the charm of prayer muttered over the ingredients I am preparing for his cure: it may not else be wrought."—"And darest thou," said the monk, shrinking with horror from the proposal, "darest thou imagine that I would blend the worship of Heaven with the rites of Hell, and mix the breath of profaned and polluted prayer with the steam that issues from that caldron of abomination? If I pray for thy victim, I pray alone."—"My victim!" cried the female, with fierce derision. "Ye are the victims of your own lusts, madness, and crime—victims of our own preparation. And then ye dare to accuse the stars—the elements—the hurtless operation of inanimate things. Yea, in your insane impotence, ye accuse that Heaven that renounces and hates ye! My victim!" she repeated; "when was man a victim, but by his own agency?"—"I heed not thy ravings," replied the monk, divested of all terror: "if good is to be wrought, tell me how, or on whom; but it never can be in conjunction with thee!"

A deep groan seemed to echo his words; and

now fully aroused and emboldened, the monk turned to observe whence it issued. That smaller heap of coiled up garments, which he had noticed before, seemed to stir, and a sound was heard from beneath it, that resembled respiration painfully suppressed. He made a movement to approach it. "Hold!" cried the female, seizing his arm, "disturb not the slumberer: Sleep is the image of death. When have mortals rest, but in sleep, or in the grave?"—"Talk not to me," said the monk,—"here hath been evil done—a corse lies in this chamber. I tell thee, wretched woman—if woman thou art—weak as I am, I will not quit this spot, till I know what body lies beneath than bloody and unblest covering."—"It is a wounded knight," she said; "and I have brought him hither that I may heal him."—"And is it with such ingredients the cure is to be wrought? What are the foul contents of yonder caldron?"—"Thou knowest not what is mingling in that potent mixture," she replied, bending her eye on it. "There be hope and anguish, crime and fear; tears wept from the heart, and mingled with its blood; maidens' young vows, and true men's broken hearts."—"Aroint thee, foul witch!" cried the monk, "*adjuro te in nomine!*"—"Peace with thy powerless jargon," she interrupted; "the adder's ear is not deafer to it than mine. Speak! wilt thou utter a prayer over what I have prepared and provided here? For myself I ask thee none: those who have nothing to hope, have also nothing to fear."—"Blaspheme not, wretched woman! Holy Heaven, is it possible that aught that once bore thine image can be so utterly fallen!"—"Fallen!" she repeated in an altered tone; "yes, truly thou sayest fallen;—it is not that time has bowed my form, that disease has ravaged my frame, that anguish has withered my heart: this is not to be fallen;—it is when God hath departed from the soul where he dwelt; when the cherubim withdraw their plumes from the mercy-seat; when the desecrated temple becomes the den of fiends, the

abode of hatred and vengeance! *That, that* is to be fallen, and that am I!"

Moved by her words, the monk was attempting to frame his voice into a tone of compassion; when, the tide of her feelings suddenly recoiling, she burst into a strain of imprecation so vehement, continuous, and dreadful, that the holy man, believing himself in truth in the presence of an evil spirit, and losing all other fears in the thought, rushed from the spot in horror: nor was it till he was at some distance from the tower, that he could collect his thoughts, and endeavour, by urgent prayer, to banish the recollection of the horrible sounds with which his ears still seemed ringing.

CHAPTER X.

When, lo! a train profusely gay
Comes prankling o'er the place.

PARNELL.

THE beams of the morning sun rising in a cloudless sky, and gleaming on the glittering frost-work of a wintry but smiling landscape; the crisped earth; the narrowed brook, with its line of blue waters gliding between two banks of crystal; the cold but reviving and bracing air; the twittering of the birds, waking in their wintry nests amid the leafless branches; and the merry bells ringing in the town of Beaucaire, whose spires towered and sparkled in the far blue horizon—came welcomely and refreshingly to the senses of the poor monk, as the morning broke on his advancing progress. The fearful night had passed, and he felt its dark images disappear before the cheering and invigorating influence of that kindliest if not loveliest of mornings—the bright healthful morning of a genial winter-day.

He wound his way through the thicket, and, after one involuntary reverted glance towards the dark tower of Ugo, was entering on the plain, when, from an opposite hill, a gay and splendid train appeared descending, and the contrast between them and the fearful forms of the past night, made them appear like some bright group from fairy-land.

A gallant array of knights and men-at-arms, well accoutred and mounted, rode round a lady, sumptuously attired, and appearing the mistress of the train: the bells round the necks of the knights' horses, and the bugles of their attendants, making a merry melody as they rode. Behind them followed a smaller train; and as they reached the foot of the hill the van halted, and the knights, reining up their steeds on each side, left a space in the centre, where the lady sat on her palfrey alone. The party in the rear then advanced, and a young female, alighting from her horse, knelt to the lady, and attempted to kiss her hand, while the other, bending from her saddle, embraced her. A short delay occurred, as a brief and hurried farewell seemed to pass between the two parties. The former gathering round the lady in the splendid garb, and pushing their horses to speed as they parted in one direction; while a single knight, with about a dozen men-at-arms, appeared to act as the guide and conductor of the other female, who had now remounted her horse, and rode rapidly in the opposite direction. The parties seemed to separate with every token of regard, the knights saluting by lowering their bannered lances and bending their plumed heads, and the females by waving the ends of their embroidered veils, and kissing their hands till they could behold each other no longer.

The former party consisted of queen Ingelberg, who with De Vaugelas and Limosin, was pursuing her way to Paris; the latter, of Sir Amirald and his train, who, by the queen's order, and at her own wish, was conducting Genevieve to Toulouse.

On that spot they had parted; but not before a

change, at which she trembled, had taken place in Genevieve's heart and mind. She had rode some days in peace and security with queen Ingelberg's party. Caressed by the grateful queen, honoured by her courtly attendants, and, most dangerous of all, loved by one, for whose love she would have forsaken all but her faith: in this short interval of tranquillity, the only one her stormy existence had ever known, characters had been developed without the strong exigency of circumstances, and feelings expressed, that seemed the birth of the heart and the habit, not of the moment.—What noble feeling!—what lofty thought!—what deep self-devotedness!—what graceful courtesy had not the knights displayed; and queen Ingelberg, who owed her superiority evidently more to her rank than to her intellectual eminence, how grateful was she! and how resistless

In all the graceful gratitude of power!*

And their manner—their voices—their language—their whole existence, seemed modulated on a scale of noble harmony. All that was lofty—all that was refined in life, seemed to be concentrated in the self-devoted valour of the men—the stately and gentle courtesy of the women. And these were the beings who had been represented to her from infancy as demons of pride, rapacity, and brutality; and Amirald, too, the beautiful, the brave, the gentle, was he indeed the enemy of Heaven?—She began to doubt her creed; then trembling at her own aberrations, forced herself to cast a look on her future life—it was one of poverty and toil; for she had sacredly determined to appropriate the value of the jewels she had received from the queen to the relief of her suffering people, and to maintain herself by her own labours; and her late existence, caressed by royalty and flattered by love, was to be a dream—And let it be a dream! she sighed, with a strong effort of in-

* Lalla Rookh.

ternal resolution: she struggled hard with her heart, and strove to fix her eye steadily on her future prospects, dreary as they were.

"Would I had never known them," she said; meaning only *him* when she said *them;* for the creed, the home, and the habits of her fathers seemed dark to her mental eye as she forced it to dwell on them: and she tried to expiate the involuntary crime by an internal resolve never to suffer gratitude, admiration, or another feeling (which she would not name but could not disavow) to interfere with the claims of her conscience;—the duties, the exigencies, the necessities, (and she often repeated the word,) the necessities of her own destination. Perhaps she was not aware that this resolution was made while her face was averted from that of Sir Amirald, for the next moment, when she beheld those features glowing with youth, beauty, and passion, she again felt her heart palpitate and her mind wander. She could not, however, decline conversing with her guide and protector, though she knew that the topic of his discourse would put her resolution to the test; and she prepared to listen with averted face and a rigid determination of self-watchfulness and self-possession.

The conversation was long, earnest, and animated on the part of Amirald: its tenor may be conjectured from the only reply of Genevieve's that was audible, —"No, Sir Knight, never!—Sir Knight, never—the destiny of a noble youth must not be thwarted and debased by a lot so lowly and hapless.—Go on, noble knight, in the career to which thy fate calls thee, and honour and fortune sit on thy lance, save when it is levelled against the helpless and the harmless! Forget me, save when thou meetest one of my people; and then think on me and spare him. Some fair and noble maiden—" but she could not finish this part of the picture; and so, having uttered her resolution with what strength she might, she said to herself, "Now my heart is at peace—yes, I *am* at

peace;" and dropping her veil, wept in silent agony within its folds.

But here she was mistaken: endless opportunities occurred during their journey, and Amirald was not a youth likely to lose his suit for lack of importunity; besides, pleading has a thousand tones, and refusal but one; and Genevieve grew wearied and ashamed of the poverty and monotony of her sole reply to the endlessly varied and increasingly eloquent pleadings of her lover: nature, too, seemed to take part against her in their progress; for the spot where they halted to partake of their noon-day meal, seemed formed to soften the heart: it was one of those spots that winter seems delighted to spare—a grassy path kept fresh and verdurous by overhanging evergreens, terminated in a rocky inclosure, whose acclivities were feathered to their very summits with every tree and shrub that could yet boast a leafy spray or a tint of green. A narrow stream fell in sheets of foam from the highest rocks, and rested in a basin, where its transparent dark-brown water gave back, as it reposed, the image of every rock and grassy tuft and pendent spray that overhung it: around, the rocks were hollowed into cavities, rich with mosses of every hue, and the fantastic clusters of creeping plants:—their rude forms, sequestered look, and the mystical and shifting light that played over them, as the sun gleamed on the water, or the wind waved the boughs, suggesting the image—

> Intus aquæ dulces, vivoque sedilia saxo,
> Nympharum domus.*

It was here the travellers rested, and seating themselves on the grass, partook of their repast, and slaked their thirst at the stream as it fell. "Thou art resolved, then, that I must be of noble birth," said Amirald, renewing the topic of their conversation as soon as he could: "Alas! sweet Genevieve,

* Virgil.

I am the child of mystery—a foundling, exposed beneath the walls of the castle of Courtenaye, and reared on the surly charity of its lord. I never knew but one, whose destiny, he told me, bore aught of similitude to mine—that darkly-fated knight de la Croix Sanglante."

Genevieve trembled at the name. "Alas!" cried Amirald, his eyes fast falling with tears at the recollection; "alas! for the noble knight!—the love of brothers was but a faint image of mine for thee, Paladour. A braver knight never laid lance in rest; a truer never pledged faith to a brother-in-arms; a goodlier never wooed lady in her bower. Woe is me for thee, Paladour! But what a fearful cloud overshadowed thy setting!"—"Fearful indeed," Genevieve murmured, shuddering as she remembered the night of the apparition in the convent of the Paraclete.

"Methinks," said Amirald, half reclining on his cloak, which he had spread on the grass, and letting his blue eye fall negligently on the lovely scene around him,—"methinks, when I recall the disastrous fate of the brave and lovely, when I think of Paladour and the lady Isabelle, the world, and all it contains, grow dim to my view. I wonder not that men have fled from it to these sweet and solitary places. Methinks I could now cut off mine hair;" and he displayed, not unconsciously, its glossy and redundant clusters; "change my lance for a staff, my chain for a rosary, mine helmet for a cowl, and dwell in yonder cave, a hooded eremite.—No, not an eremite—I would be a peasant—a wool-clad peasant; and thou, sweet Genevieve, by my side, while heart and hovel alike were brightened by the light of thy smile."

Genevieve struggled hard to wrest her mind from the contemplation of the picture; but it would not do: her natural love for rural scenery and rural habits, took part with her heart; and she thought she was but advocating her own simple tastes, while she was unconsciously pleading the cause of a differ-

ent and a more dangerous client. She spoke of the spot with an enthusiasm she had never felt before, and there was not an object around, from the blue mountains in the distance, to the redbreast that alit with its slender feet on the turf, to pick the crumbs of their meal, that she did not try to paint to his attention, with all her simple skill, till she discovered that the eyes of Amirald were fixed not on her, but on a superb eagle that was soaring right above their heads, and appeared stationary at the proud height he had towered to. "That is a gallant bird," he exclaimed, screening his dazzled eyes with his hand; "oh, who would hop and peck, a red-breast in the shade, when he might soar an eagle among the clouds? My heart would burst were I to live amid all this softness, sloth, and obscurity. Babieca, my gallant steed," he cried to his war-horse, which he had named after the Cid's, and which came forwards snorting and bounding at the sound of his voice,—"Babieca, wouldst thou not renounce my recreant weight for dooming thee but in thought to the drudgery of a vile peasant's market-horse?"

The blood rushed to Genevieve's cheek; it overspread even brow and bosom. "So wouldst thou deem *thyself* dishonoured, Sir Knight," she cried, "wert thou yoked with such humble mate as me; for ever wouldst thou blush for the shame, for ever reproach her who was its cause, and its victim."

"I should only have to reproach myself," said Amirald, whose feelings flowed in rapid and contending tides, "for having risked all for one, who had not even a heart to offer in return."

Genevieve, without speaking, fixed her eyes on him, till feeling them suffused with tears, she withdrew them. "Is this generous? is it noble?" she said at last, with a faltering voice—"is it even kind, Sir Knight?" she added, in one still more subdued, "to crush out from a heart by torture, the secret it *ought* to keep—if it could?"—"And canst thou love, sweet Genevieve?" said the youth, half-reclining to-

wards her, while his pleading tones and glowing eyes made that moment more dangerous than a thousand hours of reproaches.—"Is it manly, Sir Knight, to pursue such poor triumph farther?" said the weeping maiden.—"Nay, weep not, sweet Genevieve; in sooth I spoke but in jest; I love these scenes, I love all that is soft, soothing, and lonely: I love these leaves," he cried, catching at some from a pendant branch, "for they remind me of the couch which the gentle heretic once spread for the wounded knight. *But*," he added, and then glancing at his accoutrements, some of which lay glittering on the turf where he reclined, and pointing to his war-steed, "*But*"——"I feel, Sir Knight, what thou wouldst say," she uttered: "here let our conference end; and yet remember, noble, and knight as thou art, that *He* who made man for happiness, and was the best judge of his own work, placed him at his creation, not in palace, castle, or city—He placed him in a garden, and called it Paradise."—"And Paradise would be this spot," cried the enamoured Amirald, "if—Hark! what sound was that? was it the scream of the eagle?—no, by Heaven, the breath of the trumpet! and lo where an armed band bears up the hill! Ha! the lilies of France glitter in the van. To horse, fellows! my helmet, my gorget, help to don them quickly: it must doubtless be some noble company: fear not, maiden, I will be with thee soon."

And Sir Amirald rode away at full speed with some of the men-at-arms. Genevieve followed him with her eyes, and saw on the summit of a hill a band of knights and men-at-arms, who, with bugles sounded and banners displayed, proudly crested the eminence where they stood, seeming the precursors of a more numerous host that was following. A stately form in complete armour appeared the leader of the train; a person in the habit of a monk stood by his side, and Sir Amirald soon rode by the other. Cordial and courtly greeting passed; a brief but earnest conference then took place between the three; at the

termination of which, Sir Amirald rode off with speed in another direction, attended by a few followers of the stranger band.

Genevieve continued to gaze in the direction he pursued long after he disappeared, and then, with an indefinable feeling of dejection and anxiety, turned to look on her few remaining companions. Reading neither intelligence or comfort in their looks, and not suffering herself to doubt of Amirald's swift return, she remounted her horse, and dropping her veil sat in anxious silence. She was not long left in suspense; a man, in the habit of a pursuivant, approached from the stranger party, and, after exchanging a few words in a tone of authority with her companions, approached her with an air in which licentious freedom was blended with mock courtesy. "Fair damsel," said he, "it is the command of the princely leader of yonder band, that I conduct you to him, and that you share the protection of his company." Genevieve, mute from consternation, made no reply; the man then attempted to raise her veil, but she held it closely; he then caught her rein and led her a few steps onward. "Sir stranger," she said, checking her horse, "whatever claims your leader may have on your obedience, I know none he holds on mine." "He is noble, damsel," said the man haughtily; "let that suffice thee."—"If he be noble, let him prove it," said Genevieve, "by shewing all gentleness to a female left in the guard of a noble knight, who hath most suddenly and strangely left her."—"Mass!" said another who joined them, "this dainty maiden deems there is but one paramour in the world for her; cheer thee, damsel, shalt have a host anon, men-at-arms and all."—"Curb thy loose tongue," said the other, who saw Genevieve almost dead at his words, "and let me lead the lady on." "In the name of Heaven, gentle sir," said Genevieve.—"By the mass, a heretic!" cried the other, "or thou wouldst have called some blessed saint, and never have troubled Heaven for the matter."—"Alas, you

seem of gentler speech than this wild man," said Genevieve, turning to the first, who continued to lead her horse; "in the name of whatever may win your ear, I implore you to tell me into what hands I have fallen, and where you are leading me."

Her conductor, instead of answering, called to the driver of a horse-litter which appeared in sight, to halt. "Ah, ha!" cried the other, as two females, gaudily dressed, alit from it, with evident marks of reluctance and vexation; "ah, ah! my bonni-bells—my laced muttons—descend—dismount—give place—ye must foot it, my pretty does, unless some merciful man-at-arms or gentle squire of dames, take ye *en-croupe*."

"Vile hilding!—unnurtured slave!" said the incensed females—"is it thus thou talkest to ladies of our state?" He continued to laugh, and they to rail, while Genevieve stood amid the rude men and licentious women like an angel in the presence of fiends. —"Gentle dames," she said, trembling, "in the name of womanhood, plead for me."

"Is this the beauty so much prized?" said one of them, as Genevieve raised her veil to speak.—"This helps not," said her companion, lifting her from her horse, and placing her with the female attendant in the litter.—"One word—but one word," she cried, forcing back the curtain.—"Am I in the power of him they call the Bishop of Toulouse?"—The man regarded her with a look of compassion for the first time.—"If the Bishop of Toulouse be friend of thine," he said, "would thou wert;" and he closed the door of the litter.

The brief winter day was now on the wane. The party, who appeared to have halted merely for refreshment, prepared for departure, and, heedless of the mute despair of Genevieve, and the clamorous grief of her attendant, amid the clash of arms and the sound of trumpets, all the train rode on, the bannered lilies of France glittering in the van.

CHAPTER XI.

When Greeks join'd Greeks then was the tug of war:
The wearied battle sweat, and conquest bled.
LEE'S *Alexander.*

THE man of mighty mind, the Bishop of Toulouse, had not slumbered during the interval. He had received the intelligence of the escape of the queen and Genevieve from his power, while engaged in the aid of his ally, (as has been mentioned:) on the principle that made him sometimes foment, and sometimes conciliate the constant feuds of the neighbouring dignitaries and barons—the principle of a politician of old—*Divide et impera.* The first effect of his rage at this intelligence would have cost the messenger his life, had it not been qualified by other and more welcome tidings that arrived almost at the same moment. By his emissaries in Paris the bishop learned that king Philip was about to dispatch troops and treasure in the cause of the Crusaders, under the conduct of an unknown leader: and, what was of higher importance at that juncture, that Count Raymond, who was always satisfied with slight advantages and feeble efforts, had retired to his territorial city of Toulouse, conceiving that he had risked enough for the Albigeois, and was again employing powerful agency at Rome, to effect his reconciliation with the pope. From other missives he learned, that many of the more powerful barons of Languedoc, whose vassals were of the new sect, incensed at the slaughter and spoliation of their people, murmured against the severity of the crusade, and waited but a signal to take the abdicated place of Count Raymond. To all this was added the intelligence, that Count Simon de Monfort, to whose pretensions

and high-established fame the court of Rome had hitherto conceded every thing, was slowly recovering from his wounds, and would not be able to take the field till the following spring. The bishop instantly raised the siege, and returned to his castle at Beaucaire. There he held a feast; dignitaries and nobles thronged to it, and the result was all that his ambition could aspire to: to the devout, he suggested the scandal that a mob of heretics, a vile peasantry, should yet defy the power of the nobles, and the thunders of the church, and wander about propagating their vile abuses of religion; to the warlike he declaimed on the disgrace the cause of the church must suffer, if they allowed their lances to rust, because Simon de Monfort's wounds were unhealed; to the rapacious, he promised the plunder of the lands of those barons who secretly favoured the cause of the Albigeois, and to the timid and politic (who were the fewest of the party) he hinted the danger of the powerful lords of Languedoc rising in aid of their distressed vassals, if some strong effort were not made, some powerful blow struck on the instant. The hall rung with acclamations; the bishop seized the moment, "when their hearts were jocund and sublime," to propose himself as their leader. The place of rendezvous was fixed at Nismes; and the next morning's dawn saw the warlike prelate ride, in his own proud element, at the head of fifteen hundred lances, to meet the Crusaders in that city.

He had vital reasons for urging matters with the utmost dispatch: he was ignorant of the late reconciliation between Philip and his queen, and knowing that the troops had marched in consequence of his belief of her detention, and would be recalled as soon as the truth of her escape was known, he hasted to put himself at their head before that intelligence had reached king Philip, satisfied that he might then defy both the pope and king, when commanding a force that would not lightly desert such a leader. With these hopes and views he hurried on at the head of

his train towards Nismes, as he had learned that the troops of king Philip had marched in that direction. We mention these circumstances as explanatory of the scenes that followed Genevieve's capture, to which we have now to reconduct our readers.

The party travelled all the evening, and at night-fall arrived at the town of Nismes. Genevieve, uncertain of her destination, felt at last, from the slower motion of the litter, and the increasing tumult of voices and trampling of horses, that the party had reached their place of rendezvous. The lights of the town of Nismes began to glimmer through the curtains of her litter. Knights and peers, with their tumultuous cavalcades, rode away in the search of abode in the town, thinning not imperceptibly to Genevieve's ears the concourse and the noise. Yet she watched the parting of every knight and noble with his train, as if a friend rode away from her unprotected side. The litter still continued to proceed, though the attendants appeared to be diminished to a few individuals. At length it stopped, and Genevieve, who was assisted to alight from it, found herself in a place which she could not compare with any other that sight or even imagination had ever before presented her with.

It was a vast area, the ground unequal and frequently encumbered with huge masses of stone, of which some appeared the effect of recent dilapidation, and others were cloathed with hoary moss, the growth of centuries. There was no roof; and the moon "walking in brightness" above her head, shed her full light on masses of building, that, viewed even from the distance where she stood in the centre of the area, seemed to have been the work of antediluvian giants; arches above arches, supporting ponderous seats of marble, rose to a height that made the eye giddy; yet, in all this vast range of edifice, there was no vestige of human habitation. The stars glimmered through the tenantless arches, and the foliage waved lightly to the moon, as the breeze sigh-

ed through this vast and desolate monument of departed power. Genevieve had beheld all that was great, sublime, and even terrific in nature; but it was with a new sensation of awe that she gazed round her on this stony desert of man's creation—this huge skeleton, that might once have been clothed with myriads of poulation.* She would have inquired where she was; but the thought of her own fearful situation rushed on her, and she was silent.

When they had advanced a short space, the man who conducted her, suddenly lowering his torch, pointed to her to enter a small recess, where was a seat of stone, over which he threw his mantle; and then placing the torch in a nook, made a sign to her female attendant to withdraw while he himself retired. So utterly subdued were her spirits, so hopeless was her heart, that she made no attempt to deprecate this ominous movement, but by clasping her hands in mute and unheeded supplication.

He soon after returned with refreshments, of which he pressed her to partake; and she then recovered breath to implore him to tell her in whose hands she was, and for what purpose she had been brought to a place so dreary. The man gazed on her a moment, and, answering only by a laugh that froze her blood, again withdrew.

Starting from her trance of stupefaction, she tried to examine the place, and discover if it afforded even the most desperate means of escape. A large aperture in the wall of the recess where she was placed, gave her a view of the area below, on which the moonlight fell in full lustre. Under one of the lower arches, a band of armed men were seen carousing by the light of torches, which they had fixed against the walls. Two of distinguished port, and fully armed except their heads, were walking at some distance, and occasionally appeared to issue orders and make inquiries, or interfere to check the rude mirth

* The Amphitheatre of Nismes.

of the revellers. One of them was evidently the leader of the band they had encountered that day; the other seemed an ancient knight: but, whoever they might be, they were evidently objects of the deepest reverence to the rest; as, at their lightest word, one or other darted forth from beneath the arch, with his flaring torch, seeming to demand their pleasure. And Genevieve, amid all her terrors, could not help admiring the darkly-seen and solitary grandeur of these forms, moving alone, amid that vast pile, like its former inhabitants returned to visit earth; while the sudden flashes of light and involutions of darkness, caused by the gleam and disappearance of the torches, seemed like shadows of gigantic spectres following each other, in their majestic flight from the deserted ruins.

In a short time, the knights, apparently to shun the noise of their followers, quitted that part of the area, and walked nearer the aperture within which Genevieve withdrew herself, while every word of their conference came to her distinctly in the stillness of the night. The younger appeared at first to be rebuking the elder, for addressing him by some title that he wished to disclaim.—"Be it as thou wilt, Sir Knight of the Lilies," said the other, who happened to be our old friend Sir Aymer—"but what dost thou mean by this masking? Why art thou thus disguised at the head of a valiant, potent band?"—"To accomplish two the dearest purposes I cherish," answered the other: "to deceive my father, and to confront and confound that proud prelate of Toulouse."

"That children should deceive their parents," said Sir Aymer, "is doubtless the law of nature, or of custom, which comes to the same thing. I had that virtue in my youth, but let that pass. Wherefore chafest thou so hotly against the warlike prelate?"—"I hate him—hate him deadly," answered the younger speaker, inhaling the air as he spoke, like a reined *and impatient* steed. "The throne of King Philip

is but a toy—an infant's bauble; while its power, if not its seat, is shared by his insolent encroaching vassals, the Bishop of Toulouse and Count Simon de Monfort. How the proud prelate will chafe, when he sees *who* leads the lances of King Philip."—"Men say he rides at the head of two thousand lances himself," answered Sir Aymer; "and thinkest thou he will lightly yield them to another leader?"—"Lightly or not, he *shall* yield them," said the other, fiercely; "the bull may bellow in his grange, but he will tremble when he hears the lion roar, and feels that he has dared to cross his path."—"Royal whelp," said Sir Aymer, "take heed that thou roar not too loud, ere thy fangs and claws be fully grown."

The other was silent for a moment, and then said, in a voice almost choked with passion,—"By Heaven, Sir Knight de Chastelroi, thou dost not suffer the privilege my indulgence has allowed thee of being my reprover to go into abeyance."—"Jesters are allowed their privilege, my liege," said Sir Aymer; "and perchance the office of a jester and a reprover are always the same; at least they are both alike the subjects of scorn and of neglect. But, meanwhile, spend not thy spleen on me, Sir Knight of the Lilies; hoard it all up for the Bishop of Toulouse. If all report says be true, he will have enough to hoard and vent in his turn: all provocation that thou canst give him is light compared with that which awaits him."—"How meanest thou?" said the other, impatiently.—"Even what I say, my liege: report reached me on the way, that Simon de Monfort himself is on his journey hither, and that his warlike dame hath flung plaster and cataplasm, cullis and cordial, at the leech's head, and braced him in iron from head to heel. Some ears have heard his trumpets; but that must be by witchcraft."—"Now, by Heaven! I should wish to hear them this moment," replied the interlocutor. "Ha! goes the game there?—then have I to confront the haughty prelate in his pride, and the brutal De Monfort in his borrowed power. The

thought stirs my blood. Methinks we resemble three streams that I have seen falling from the mountains, narrow, feeble, and chafing with their rocky banks; but, when they dashed into the valley, and met together conflicting, how loud was their uproar, how fierce their encounter!—the spray ascending up the silent rocks from which they fell, aud the roar heard and felt among the mountains, which the conflict shook to their bases."—"It may be a magnificent metaphor," said Sir Aymer; "but in my poor opinion it resembles more what I have seen in a *morality*, when the fool, iniquity, and the devil, after playing their several passions, met at last on the stage, and belaboured each other, to the huge contentment of the audience. A merry, mad world," Sir Aymer added, half sighing, half whistling, apart to himself, "when three bands of the Crusaders meet to destroy the heretics, and then pause first, to ask whether they must not previously knock out each other's brains?"—"But thou wilt stand by me," said the younger knight; "thou wilt doubtless stand by me:" he spoke doubtingly.—"With heart and brand, with life and limb, my liege," answered Sir Aymer; and, when he had thus spoken with all the energy of feudal faith and chivalric loyalty, he added some light words, intimating the facility with which females might be won, when the approaching war must make wooers scarce.

The other speaker appeared to withdraw from the topic with that disgust which youth feels at the ill-affected follies of age—"By Heaven," he said, "thou preachest better than a Dominican, for thou dost thoroughly distaste one of sin and folly. To hear one so old, and yet so vicious, is merely a disgust to youth."—"*I* vicious? I defy thee," said Sir Aymer, "prove me such, and I will abide thy questioning."—"Darest thou deny that thou canst over-drink even the abbot of Normoutier—that most bibulous and misquoting churchman?"—"The church gives both example and precept," quoth Sir Aymer: "Some

choose the former, and some the latter: for myself, I adopt the example, not the precept, of the church; and on that quarrel I will fight while there is a grape to be pressed in Languedoc."—"That thou wilt game with a page, cheat with a jongleur, and lie with a palmer who pretendeth that he hath been in the land of Armeny!"—"The former was a churchly vice, the latter a princely one; for I have heard *thee* forswear thyself at tennis like a ——; but all simile fails. Proceed; I have no doubt to prove myself virtuous at the last."—"That thou art a most unconscionable——?"—"Nay, thou art the devil reproving sin. Whereto tends this goodly masque thou art acting this night? Wherefore art thou apart from thy train, amid these solitary ruins? And what means that damsel in the nook, (the beatings of whose heart I can hear as I walk,) whom thou didst bear away from her guide and champion? Ha, my royal hawk, thou art about to pounce on thy quarry, and yet reproving a poor mousing owl like me, that am fain to blink for my prey sometimes in a barn."—His companion laughed vehemently at the reprisal of the old knight, and then swore deeply that nothing pleased him more in the adventure than sending her champion on a wild emprize to tilt against a tower inhabited by spirits—"By our Lady of Notre Dame," he cried, "unless I had that fanatic dotard, that monk of Montcalm, to aid me with his tales of witchcraft, and I know not what, I never could have won that saucy stripling (who hath not a hair on his cheek, though he presumes to love) to sever from her side."—"Speak not so lightly of spirits and witchcraft, 'specially in this lonely place," said Sir Aymer, crossing himself; "thou art not an infidel! Marry, this darkness and loneliness were enough to convert a man." (The train had retired, and a single solitary torch shed its light over the vast extent of the area.)—"An infidel! I scorn thy words: I am about to convert a heretic, and when I have taught her her creed, thou shalt confirm her

in it."—Sir Aymer laughed again, and then demanded, in a careless tone, if he knew the name of the knight whom he had robbed of his prize with the unconscious help of the monk of Montcalm.—"Name," repeated the other; "name—methinks they call him Sir Amirald."

The steps of Sir Aymer were instantly checked, and his tone altered. "Sir Amirald," he repeated; "he who fell in our mad encounter with the Albigeois, headed by Raymond of Toulouse."—"Ay,—fell like thee, and many others, to rise again."—"He who did good service to Queen Ingelberg, pleading in her cause on an occasion thou wottest of."—"He was overpaid by a kiss of the queen's hand;—a landless, birthless, nameless, nothing—knighted for some mad exploit of chivalry."—"I heard he saved the life of King Philip at the battle of Bovines," said Sir Aymer, with increasing emphasis: "was that the mad deed of chivalry thou speakest of?"—"And if he did," answered the other, "his exploit, as thou lovest to term it, prevented the crown of France from descending on a brow that would have worn it better. Deemest thou I owe him deep obligation for such exploit?" and he dwelt on the word maliciously.

"Sir Knight of the Lilies," said Sir Aymer, "since such it is thy pleasure to be called, here I pause. I have a foolish fondness for that boy, and somehow cannot bear to see him wronged. Were it the loose leman of a common youth; but no, no—I cannot brook this."—"What dost thou, what *darest* thou mean?" said the other in wrath; "is not the boy a plebeian?—is not the maiden a heretic?"—"Plebeian—heretic—what thou wilt," answered Sir Aymer; "she is to me as sacred in yonder nook, as an enshrined nun in her cloister: and I say, Sir Knight of the Lilies, that in *her* cause, her champion and protector being absent by base fraud—fraud, mark me—I will will wield brand against a host!"—"Traitor-knight!" exclaimed the other, "wilt thou

turn thy brand against thy——" "Not for my life!" answered Sir Aymer, sheathing the sword he had half drawn. "But this I say, that if thou doest young Amirald such deep wrong, never more will Sir Aymer and his fifty faithful lances ride by thy standard—never more will——" "Hence, dotard, with thy threats!" said the other, stamping in fury: "hence with thyself, thy menace, and thy men-at-arms! and in thine absence I will have leisure to weigh which I hold in the greater disdain." He broke from Sir Aymer as he spoke, and in a moment after Genevieve had the horror to see him burst into the recess where she sat, his inflamed visage and flashing eye betokening that the late conference had done aught but assuage the passions that already burned too fiercely. His first impression was evidently that of awe—the awe that the presence of perfect beauty inspires; and he stood before her, now first seen, like one who has broken into a sanctuary to plunder it, and, dazzled by the glory of the holy ornaments, stands amazed at his intended sacrilege. Genevieve was the first to recover herself, and assume, at least, the courage necessary for speaking. "Noble knight," she said, tremulously, "I thank you for your care of me in my journey, and for my quiet though somewhat lonely lodgment here; and I crave to know when I may be permitted to rejoin my party; when my thanks shall be doubled—yea, trebled?" And in agonizing sincerity she pressed her hands on her bosom.—"Fair maiden," said the youth, gathering courage from her sweet and timid accents, from which he drew a favourable but false augury of the pliancy of her character,—"fair maiden, thy thanks are most grateful guerdon; but, perchance, I may ambition a higher and dearer reward."—"The thanks of a noble knight shall be added to mine," said Genevieve, in a voice still more earnest, "for the protection vouchsafed to his deserted companion."—"*His* thanks?" repeated the youth, in a tone of high disdain; "his thanks? Yes, he owes

me much, and thou dost well to turn me over to him for payment; but I mean in his absence to exact it from a fairer debtor."—"If thou meanest my ransom, Sir Knight," said Genevieve, who struggled with her own conviction to misunderstand him, "and if thou wilt deign to accept ransom for one of nameless birth, it shall be paid. I have jewels—jewels of price: all, all shall be placed in thine hands, so thou wilt restore me to my friends in safety and honour." And at this moment she would indeed have willingly placed the costly gift of the queen in his hands, on the conditions she named.—"I will accept thy ransom," said the youth, approaching her, "when thou canst show me a ruby with a tint like thy lip, or a diamond with a beam like thine eye; or, would I had not to add, a pearl pale and precious as thy cheek." Her cheek was indeed pale.—"Noble knight," she cried, no longer daring to misunderstand him, "noble knight, have mercy on me!" and she fell on her face at his feet.—"Mercy on thee!" said the youth, walking a few paces from her, and evidently embarrassed at her appeal,—"mercy on thee! And what mercy hast thou on me? Is not each word, each look, each movement, doing the work of many daggers on mine heart? Maiden, thou hast bowed thyself before me: I bow to thee in my turn; and, trust me, no common suppliant pleads. Pity, and love me." "Oh, Amirald! where art thou?" cried Genevieve, in agony unutterable.—"Amirald again!" said the youth with fierce impatience: "what, is thy fancy so weak and worthless, dwelling on that boy—that stripling, blushing and beardless? *Thou* for whom, but for thy plebeian birth and accursed creed, the lances of every knight from Nismes to Paris might be shivered, and——" "Oh, let them be my advocates!" cried Genevieve—"my lowly birth, my hated creed; let them plead for me! I am unworthy of thy meanest thought, noble knight: spurn me—dismiss me—crush me to the earth!"

"And *Amirald*," said the youth, pacing the narrow recess furiously—"Amirald?—no, Sir Amirald;—it is plain whence such familiar speech hath its rise between a heretic peasant and a belted knight."—"Believe that too," said Genevieve; "believe all that is vile of me—all that can make me unworthy of thee."—"And if I did," said her companion, "yet hardly can I believe it," he added, gazing on her pure and pallid beauty: "and if I did, darest thou play the coy one with *me*, when by thine own confession thou hast acted other part with that stripling, that boy?"—"Oh no, no," cried Genevieve in agony; "I wronged, I belied him: he is innocent as I am: disregard, disdain me—but doubt not of the truth and loyalty of Sir Amirald."—"So much zeal for one without name, without descent, without lineage, and all under the name of gratitude!" said the youth, retreating from her with a proud step, and measuring her with a prouder eye. "What, then, canst thou deny, under the name of *love*, to one who wooes thee in the highest title that ever reached the ear of plebeian damsel? The fairest dames in France have courted the distinction thou hast scorned. It is not for me to sue. Vile peasant, thou mayst count amongst the highest honours of thy life, that of being the paramour of Lewis the Dauphin of France."

At the word, Genevieve uttered a shriek of ecstacy. She sprang on her feet, and, tearing the ring from her finger, cried, "Art thou the Dauphin, Prince Lewis of France? Then am I safe as the daughter of King Philip in a warded tower, with princes for her guard. Thou canst not destroy the peace and fame of her who saved thy mother's life! The scar is on my breast—the ring is in thine hand—the proof is in thine heart!" she exclaimed, with increasing energy, as she saw Prince Lewis bend over the ring, which she almost forced into his hand. "Oh, never can the son destroy the preserver of the mother! Approach—touch me now, if thou darest!"

thoughts, and, accosting Sir Aymer, as if he wished to divert his attention also, he pointed to where a few streaks of grey in the clouds indicated the approach of morning. "Be those clouds," he said, "that gather so darkly on yonder hill?"—"If they be," answered his companion, "they are clouds that will burst in thunder soon. In that very line is the bishop of Toulouse marching by credible report; and, as I look, methinks those clouds change their places like the forms of men in motion."

As he spoke, the trampling of horses was heard, and Bernard de Vaugelas and Pierre de Limosin were seen riding at full speed towards them. They checked their steeds when they saw the dauphin,—"Tidings, my liege, and of high concernment," they cried, alighting from their horses. "First, welcome, gentlemen and friends," said Lewis; "and next for your tidings."—"We seek your Highness by command of your royal mother," said Vaugelas, "who detached us from her train for the purpose." "How fares our dearest mother?" said Lewis.—"Well; and commends her to your Highness; and we have ridden two hours before the dawn, to bring you tidings that the Bishop of Toulouse is at hand with fifteen hundred lances at his back."—"And *we* are here, prepared to give him welcome," replied the Dauphin.—"He hath marched with such speed, that he was fain to halt with his overwearied band on yonder hill—(Prince Lewis cast a look of defiance and enmity in the direction);—and thy careful mother enjoins thee to beware the meeting with that proud and potent prelate."—"That is a woman's counsel," said the Dauphin. "What is thine, De Limosin?"—"That your highness beard and brave the hot churchman in his pride. He is to enter the town by dawn, to celebrate the mass in the cathedral of Nismes; and then to offer himself as leader of the armies of the church, to the assembled knights and

peers."—"Ho, mine armour!" cried Lewis, starting as from a trance; "mine armour, knave!"—"Your highness is already armed," said Vaugelas, "as well by the presence of your faithful knights as by your stoutest harness."—"I meant not that," said Lewis, vexed at perceiving that his emotion was observed; "I meant that this armour was too heavy. I must haste to my lodging to change it. Where is Eustache? but I sent him on other errand. This news hath bewildered me, I think," he added with a forced smile. "Noble knights, gentlemen, friends, may I depend on your aid on the morrow, when we meet the proud prelate?"—"As firmly as on the brand your highness leans on," answered the knights.—"I must haste to the town," said Lewis; "I must rouse and summon my noble friends to join me on the morrow: the *morrow?* by Heaven, it is already bright dawn! There is not a moment to be lost: Sir Aymer, thou wilt with us?"—"So please you, my liege," said Sir Aymer, "I have had somewhat a restless night, and have also a foreboding that to-morrow will be a doubtful if not a bloody day; and methinks I would willingly secure some mortal rest in this world, before I am dismissed to my final one."—"Come then with me, De Vaugelas, and noble De Limosin; your spirits are untired: come with me, and let us try if a son of France or a shaveling churchman hath most influence with her noble and puissant chivalry."—"We wait on your highness, and demand but to be put to the proof," said the knights.—"If I meet Sir Amirald," said Sir Aymer, "I will bid him haste to your aid, my liege."—"And when I am king of France, I will appoint thee to the office of my jester in requital," answered Prince Lewis, as he hastened toward the town, where all that morning he toiled among the knights and peers who had followed his standard, exacting renewed oaths of fidelity, and receiving assurances of

it, grounded more on their hatred to the Bishop of Toulouse, than on their attachment to the ambitious, voluptuous, and vindictive Dauphin. In these anxious conferences two hours passed away, and the morning sun broke on the city of Nismes.

CHAPTER XII.

Come one—come all. Yon rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I.
Lady of the Lake.

By its earliest light the Bishop of Toulouse and his train had ridden into the city. Immediately on his arrival he hastened to the cathedral to celebrate mass; but as he passed through the aisle, he was struck by the sight of a number of knights, who were ranged like statues on either side, completely armed and with their visors closed; and who returned slight or rather no obeisance to the bishop, as he marched amid a train of nobles and ecclesiastics towards the altar. Their appearance caught the eye of the bishop as he passed on amid ranks of bowing churchmen and kneeling knights craving his benediction, which he dispensed with due solemnity, and then, as he approached the altar, and prepared to change his robes for the ceremony, sent his crosier-bearer to demand of the knights why they assumed such hostile and unwonted guise in the church. The knights answered not a word, and kept their visors down. The ceremony began: again a messenger was despatched to require them to depart, if they joined not in external devotion at least, while the holy mysteries were celebrating. The crosier-bearer, who delivered the second message, seemed to himself, as he said, to walk amid the pillars of a cathedral, so stern, erect, and motionless stood the figures; and he returned with another report of the impenetrable silence of the unknown knights.—The sacred bell was rung, and every head and knee was bent to the earth at the sound, but those of the party that filled the aisle. At the conclusion of the ceremony, which the bishop performed with imposing dignity, yet not

altogether without some misgivings of heart, he prepared to address the congregation, which was composed of his own train of knights and men-at-arms, (mixed with the troops of king Philip,) from the altar where he stood; that his appeal might want no influence of the spiritual power in aid of the forces of the temporal, with which he felt himself amply furnished. His address, powerful and eloquent, was received with loud acclamations by his own party; and they were even echoed by some of king Philip's troops, with whom the character of the warlike prelate stood high. The mute and visored figures who filled the aisle of the cathedral were observed to exchange whispers with each other at this latter sound. "For you, noble knights," said the bishop, "though your demeanour hath been somewhat discourteous and full of mystery, though ye have refused to raise your visors, or to utter speech, or to join in the rites of holy church, we honour you as the leaders of those troops whom king Philip, that faithful son of the church, hath sent in aid of her cause, now at its utmost peril; and demand of you (and such demand ye will perchance deign to answer) to know whose hands ye are commissioned to entrust them?—A single knight stepped forward, and stood in the centre of the aisle, confronting the bishop as he stood by the high altar, and without raising his visor or altering his posture, answered, "To the hands of him who led them here."—"And who is he?" demanded the bishop.—"Lewis, the dauphin of France," said the knight, raising his visor, while all the knights of his train at the signal made a similar disclosure; and the bishop of Toulouse beheld around him the countenances of many of the noblest and the most hostile peers and knights of France.

For a moment his presence of mind forsook him. He had believed Prince Lewis far distant, waging unsuccessful war in England, and wasting his time and troops before Dover Castle, in consequence of the reproach of King Philip, who, on the the mention

of his son's exploits and successes in England, remarked he had not yet got *its key*. Yet Prince Lewis was on the spot confronting him, and at the head of Philip's troops. For a moment, we say, his self-possession forsook him; but in the next he recovered himself, and descending from the steps of the altar, advanced to meet the Dauphin.—"My liege prince and future sovereign," he said with dignity, "we greet you well with the homage of true hearts and strong hands, armed alike in the cause of your royal house and of the church. But wherefore hath your grace come upon us thus in disguise?"—"Lord bishop," said Prince Lewis, with somewhat of a grim smile, "men ever go to a doubtful feast masked." The bishop of Toulouse passed on to greet the knights of Prince Lewis's train; and it was admirable to see the address with which he hailed those whom he deemed the most accessible, and the dignity with which he met the most hostile; while from time to time he bent his ear to a lame and diminutive figure who hobbled beside him, and seemed to be playing the fool amid the magnificent pageantry of that ecclesiastical drama. This was no other than Sir Ambrose, (the *ci-devant* Deacon Mephibosheth,) who was whispering to him intelligence of which he resolved in this exigency instantly to avail himself. The ceremonial of meeting over, the bishop again retired to the altar, near which Prince Lewis and his train ranged themselves in firm and steady line; and exalting his voice, "Nobles, and knights of France," he cried, "I have rendered the duty of a subject to the son of my liege lord the king, and must now render it to the son of Him whose minister I am, and in whose temple I stand. In *his* cause we are armed and his favour alone can bid our banners float in triumph; but shall we dare to hope for that favour if those banners are grasped by the hand that caresses a heretic? Yes, noble peers, ye well may look amazed! Prince Lewis, who claims the honour of leading you, nourishes in his bosom a heretic con-

cubine, and stained with such mortal sin, is unworthy to fight even among the meanest ranks of the army of the church."

At this charge, the substance of which had been overheard by Sir Ambrose in whispered conversation among Prince Lewis's knights, and had been instantly communicated to the bishop, who seized on it as a desperate defence in his extremity—at this charge, a murmur was heard among the crusaders, many of whom began to casts looks of disdain and distrust on the Dauphin. Prince Lewis's soul rushed to his face, not with shame, but with rage; and, instead of addressing the knights he turned fiercely on the bishop—"And is it thou," he cried—"thou who darest to reprove thy prince for lightness!"

"For thy foul slanders, prince," said the bishop, with an insolent affectation of meekness, "thou hast my pity and my prayers. Methinks the fair beauty, the lady Blanche,* and the respect thou owest to the royal house of Castile, should recall thee from wandering in quest of light and lawless love."—"Insolent and meddling priest!" exclaimed Lewis, maddening at being thus checked and schooled in the presence of his nobles, "what hast thou to do with thy prince's domestic concerns, or with his royal right? the which he will maintain in spite and in scorn of thee! Judge, lords, how lightly this proud churchman will prize your honours, when he dares thus check your sovereign in the presence of his subjects."—"Ungrateful as thou art forgetful!" cried the bishop, kindling in his turn—"is it thus thou speakest of churchmen, to whom thy father owes his throne and life? Who, at the battle of Bovines, marshalled the array, and fought in the van of King Philip's host?—who won the day that else had seen King Philip throneless?—Guerin, the warlike bishop of Senlis.* Who, on that day, armed only with a

* Blanche of Castile, wife of Lewis, and daughter of Alphonso and Elinor of England.

* Vide, for this and the following, L'Histoire de France, par *M. Velly.*

mace of iron, (for the holy man would not draw sword, to avoid the guilt of bloodshed,) felled to the earth and made prisoner the stout Earl of Salisbury? —Philip de Dreux, bishop of Beauvais. And is it for *thee* to scoff at churchmen? Profane prince, prouder heads and stouter hearts than thine have bowed, and *shall* bow yet, to their power. Remember Henry, emperor of Germany, doing penance barefoot and in winter at the gates of a pontiff's castle."—"Where the holy father," interrupted Lewis, "was revelling with the Countess Matilda."—Out on thee, ribald—reviler! Remember examples nearer home: remember Henry of England, lashed by monks at the tomb of the holy Becket; and his son John kneeling, but as yesterday, to receive his crown, at the footstool of the legate Pandulf."—"Remember *thou* also," retorted Lewis, "the noble letter of Eudes, duke of Burgundy, to my father; wherein he counselled him neither to make peace nor war at the command of pope or cardinal; where he swore to aid him with his vassals, treasure and right arm in their spite, and to enter into no treaty with them without his sovereign: remember the answer of King Philip to thy master, pope Innocent, that he owed his royaume to God and his sword, and thought scorn to hold them by permission of a priest.* If our annals hold such matter as thou hast quoted, (eternal shame to the churchmen who write them!) their brighter pages show many an example of high resolve and noble defiance to the insolence of priestly power."—"Judge, peers of France," cried the bishop, "how fit is he to lead the armies of the church, who thus insults her minister and defies her power! Hence, prince Dauphin; waste if thou wilt the troops and treasures of France in nameless exploits and fruitless conquests on English land; but dream not of leading the armies of the faithful. Men mocked at the laxity of King John, when the depu-

* Vide M. Velly.

ties of Rouen came to him to implore succours for the last city that held out for him in Normandy, and found him playing at chess; and how much seemlier were it that the crusaders should demand where was their leader, and be answered, 'Dallying in his tent in the arms of a cursed heretic.'"—"The heretic shall be burnt," cried Sir Ambrose (who had not forgotten his rancour against the luckless Geneviève;) "she shall be burnt with fire."—"Traitor-priest!" cried Lewis, losing all self-command, and laying his hand on his sword.—"Impious prince," said the bishop, (while Sir Ambrose retreated behind him,) "is it in the house of God that thou assailest his servant?

The knights interposed, and Prince Lewis, sheathing his half-drawn sword and stamping with fury, exclaimed in a choked voice, "How long, my lords of France, will ye see your prince baited by these cowled and mitred bloodhounds?—Is there a noble among you—a *knight*—a *Frenchman*, gentlemen, who will fight under other standard, when his sovereign's is displayed? or join in other *cri d'armes*, when the word is *Montjoie St. Denis?*"

The last words uttered with the utmost power of the Dauphin's voice, were echoed by all his train; and even by many of the bishop's, who yielded to the feeling of the moment; and the cathedral of Nismes, cloister, aisle, and roof, rang to the cry of *Montjoie St. Denis!* But at this moment, louder than all the acclamations, was heard the sound of trumpets blown at a short distance, and announcing some distinguished approach. The bishop of Toulouse instantly recognised the trumpets of the Count de Monfort; for in those days, as it is said, every one of high distinction had a blast or note sounded peculiar to themselves, and which was well known to hearers even at a remote distance. The bishop's countenance changed; but instantly commanding its expression, and adopting the only alternative of which the sudden and desperate emergency allowed, he

quitted his station by the altar and advanced towards the Dauphin, wisely judging that he could more easily govern the volatile and impetuous Lewis, even at the head of an army, than Simon de Monfort alone. As he advanced towards the prince, who, suspecting the meaning of this sudden movement, kept his hand on his dagger,—"My liege prince," he said, "here let our strife end. I yield me to thy claim: I transfer mine own to strengthen thine. Let us unite together against this Simon de Monfort, who will else prove too powerful for either singly. I will march under the oriflamme of my sovereign, but not beneath the banners of a subject." Lewis gazed on him for a space, as one would on some fierce animal, which, in the act to spring on and rend him, suddenly crouches at his feet, as dreading his treachery not less than his fury: "Be it so," he cried at last, like one taken by surprise; "but if thou playest me false!" The bishop answered only by a significant gesture; and, while this short scene passed, the band of De Monfort came pouring into the cathedral church of Nismes: page, pursuivant, and even herald—such was the royal state in which Simon de Monfort rode—crowded into the aisles, followed by the men-at-arms, knights, and peers, who had gathered round his standard; and last appeared De Monfort himself. He entered the aisle slowly and painfully, but still with an air of conscious and habitual superiority: his hair and beard were long and neglected; his features, naturally harsh, and now squalid from long illness, had almost a ghastly expression; and this was increased by the swathes in which his head was still bound. He wore his armour, but with evident difficulty, as still scarce able to bear its weight; and over it, instead of a surcoat, was thrown a mantle lined with miniver. His gigantic form was bowed by infirmity; but, though he moved with pain, he still tried to move erect, and his hollow voice had abated nothing of its usual haughty tone of command.

As he reached the centre of the aisle, and stood leaning on his huge sword, and looking round him with a portentous aspect of silent inquiry, he seemed like the gigantic spectre of some departed warrior, who had started from the grave in arms as he lay, at the last summons. The Bishop of Toulouse advanced to meet him; while Prince Lewis whispered to the knights, by whom he was surrounded, and who had stood in amaze at the sudden accommodation between the hostile prince and prelate.

"My lord de Monfort," said the bishop, "we greet you well; and joy to behold that, though no longer able to lead the armies of the church, you come, in your christian zeal, to partake in her councils."—"I come," replied De Monfort, rejecting the hand which the bishop extended towards him, half in greeting, half in benediction, and supporting himself on his sword, "I come, lord bishop, not to partake of your councils, but to maintain my right—right that hath been wrested from me in mine involuntary absence, and in the forged and false belief of mine infirmity."—"Forged belief!" repeated the bishop, crossing himself, as he retreated in well-dissembled amaze, and glancing a look of hypocritical compassion around. "Alas! my lords, he trembles as he speaks."

"If I tremble, it is with rage, not weakness, injurious prelate," said De Monfort. "But I see thy crafty aim: thou knowest mine hot ungoverned humour, and wouldst urge me to some wild speech or fierce act, that might work me dishonour in the eyes of this fair assembly."—"An I do not ere the day be done," said the bishop internally, "I will exchange my mitre for a coxcomb."—"Fair assembly," cried the Dauphin,* hotly breaking in on the conference, "and fair example in truth—where proud

* The title of Dauphin was not assumed by the eldest sons of France till, I believe, the year 1343—more than a century after the period of this tale; but it is ascribed by Shakspeare to Prince Lewis in the play of King John, and "*quid non ego homuncio!*"

subjects meet to debate on the rights of princes to lead their own liege vassals to battle!

"Boy!—princely boy!" said the veteran chief, with hollow voice and tremulous action; "I saw thee take the noble rank of knight at Compeigne on the feast of Pentecost, from the hand of thy royal father Philip: I heard thee sworn to *l'amour de Dieu et des Dames.*"

"And I am a heretic," said Sir Aymer, half audibly, "if his highness fulfil not one part of his vow to the letter."

"I was thy sponsor," continued De Monfort, extending his wrinkled hand, "at the font which a true knight holds sacred as that of his baptism; and could I deem, when the spur was buckled on thy heel, and the sword first girded on thy stripling's thigh, that thou, my *damoiseau*, my royal *varlet*,* wouldst ever draw it in quarrel against thy godfather-in-arms?"

Prince Lewis, touched by the recollection, was silent for a moment. The bishop of Toulouse saw there was not a moment to be lost: "and were it so," he cried, "what avails thy tale of Compeigne and feasts of Pentecost? Does that give thee a title to usurp the Dauphin's power, and make thy liege thy vassal? What right dost thou pretend to in this fair assembly higher than that of other loyal peers of France?—of me, for instance, or of the nobles who surround us?—"What right?" cried De Monfort: "is the question asked in jest, or in scorn? I claim the command of the armies of the church (as thou well knowest, lord bishop) by commission from thy master the Pope himself."—"The holy father," said the bishop, "was deceived by false reports, palliating, if not concealing thine infirmity of health, and other causes that render such appointment null."—"*Other causes!*" cried De Monfort, biting his lip to repress his choler: "I claim it by consent, yea, by

* *Terms in chivalry applied to the knights probationers.*

command, of King Philip of France."—"He will revoke that consent," said Prince Lewis, "when he knows it prejudicial alike to the interests of the church and the honour of his son."—"I claim it, then, in right of *this*," cried De Monfort, striking his gauntleted hand on his sword, the blow making the paved floor of the church ring again: "and if that plea avail not," he added, with somewhat a tremor in his voice, "by these, and these, and these;" and he pointed proudly to the numerous wounds that his armour concealed, but under whose effect he was still evidently suffering.—"Tell also where those wounds were received," said the bishop, tauntingly. "Even in that wild battle to which thou led'st the chivalry of France in thy pride, and where its flower fell—the victims of thy mad counsel."—"God's malison on thee, thou proud prelate!" cried De Monfort, yielding to his choler; "art thou, too, turned mine enemy? Ere I came hither, men told me the Dauphin and thou were well nigh hurling your daggers at each other's heads in deadly wrath, and do ye now join together to bait me with your injuries and reproaches?"—"I sought and obtained the pardon of the holy prelate," said Lewis, somewhat suddenly, "for mine unadvised speech."—"My royal son," said the bishop, with more graceful dissimulation, "it was won ere it was asked." De Monfort shook his head, as he viewed them both with a stern but expressive smile,—"Prince and prelate, crafty as ye are, and crafty ye are as the fiend himself, ye do not deceive me; ye cannot by your hollow truce deceive these lords, who were witnesses but now to your deadly feud, and all but mortal strife. Peers, and knights of France," he cried, "will you march under divided counsels and unfriendly leaders, or under the sole and faithful guidance of him ye once named your Maccabee?" And the voice of the veteran, weakened by infirmity and emotion, faultered again: not so the thousand

voices that shouted, "A De Monfort!—à De Monfort!" in answer.

"An we make not in to the rescue, the field is lost," whispered the bishop to Prince Lewis:—"Out on thee," he thundered aloud, "thou bloody chief! Thy cruelties have stained the cause of the church, and brought defeat and disgrace on our arms!"—"Dissembling priest!" cried de Monfort kindling, "dost *thou* name cruelty?—thou, who at the sack of Lavaur didst chaunt the *Veni Creator*, with thy clergy, to the shrieks of four hundred heretics perishing in the flames!"*—"Their crime merited such punishment," interposed the bishop; "but thy cruelties were wanton as they were needless—the fruits of thy dark and bloody soul. Remember the foul assassination of the count of Beziers!—heretic as he was, he was thy prisoner, entrusted to thine honour!"—"The murder of the lady of Lavaur!" cried Lewis, "flung by thine order or thy hand into a pit, and whelmed with stones—the murder of a noble lady, thou stain to chivalry!"—"Thy sworn and solemn truce with the Count de Foix, ordained by the council of Lateran, violated in wanton perfidy!" exclaimed the bishop.—"Nor is thy perfidy less than thy pride!" continued Lewis, "*Simon en nom, et roi en faict.*"†—"And thy rapacity surpassing both!" pursued the bishop, giving him no rest: "thou, who didst force the heiress of Bigorre from the arms of her wedded and rightful lord, and compel to espouse thy son, that ye might seize and share her ample dower!"

At this detail of the well-known enormities of Count Simon, a murmur spread even among his own train; and those who had hitherto stood nearest him, began, as in shame, to fall from his side.

De Monfort looked round him with a wild and

* Vide Velly, Vol. iii. for this and what follows, and Perrin, *passim*.

† The expressions applied to De Monfort by Philip Augustus, when complaining of him to the Pope.

vacant glare: his passions, always violent, in this desperate moment of shame and anguish utterly overpowered his reason; a kind of delirium seized him, and unsheathing his dagger, while he shouted "A De Monfort! à De Monfort!" he rushed to where Prince Lewis stood. The movement was so rapid and unlooked for, that the blow, though aimed by the hand of a madman, might have been fatal, had not a young knight thrown himself between De Monfort and the Dauphin, and received it himself. It pierced between the joints of the vantbrace to his shoulder, and the blood burst from the wound.

At sight of the blood, which all believed to be that of the prince, a cry of consternation and horror burst from the whole assembly: shouts of "Treason! treason!" and "Make fast the gates!" resounded on every side, and all parties hastened to gather round the Dauphin. In the tumult, the attendants of De Monfort found means to bear him away, still struggling, but exhausted; and his band of knights and followers, unable to justify the outrage they had witnessed with horror, departed to a man.

"I will after him on the instant," cried the bishop to Prince Lewis; "and, while his blood is warm, I will paint to him his guilt in such horrors as shall make him deem the concession of his claim but light atonement for such deadly crime."—"After him, then, my noble friend," answered the Dauphin, "and St. Denis to speed!" Then as the bishop departed with his train, "False priest!" he murmured, "I trust thee as I love thee; but where is the youth who preserved me from the arm of that mad assassin?" he cried, looking round him.—"Here, my liege," answered a youthful voice; while the speaker, making low obeisance, and raising his casque, disclosed the features of Sir Amirald.

Lewis recoiled, as if stung by an adder: he recovered himself, however, sufficiently to wave the knights who surrounded him to a distance: then in a hurried voice, "How now!" he said, "so soon

returned?"—"In most happy time, my liege, did I return to meet the peril that menaced your grace."—"And you found the tower of Hugo empty?" cried Lewis, though Amirald had not said so.—"As empty," answered the youth with emphasis, "as your grace's promise of safe conduct and honourable usage for my hapless companion."—"Sir boy," said Lewis, haughtily, "presume not, on the slight service thou hast rendered us, to deem that we will brook such look or language from a subject: but I see whence this strange boldness springs—thou lovest this errant damsel thyself. 'Tis well: and so thou provest thy loyalty as knight, by upbraiding thy prince; and thy faith as crusader, by daring to love a heretic. Thou wouldst marry her too, I warrant, in thy romance of honourable love. Now, by St. Denis, I will keep the damsel in my custody, were it but to prevent such foul disgrace to the Church's cause."—"It will be more dishonoured, prince," replied the youth, "when a helpless and lonely maiden is the victim of a crusader's violence and wrong."

"Avoid my presence!" said Lewis, stamping, "lest *she* prove not mine *only* victim, as thou darest to term it. By Heaven, I am well schooled between a hoary ruffian and a beardless stripling! Hold—stay—come back," he cried, as the youth, giving him a look that subjects sometimes can give, and princes sometimes must bear, was retiring,—"Come back, I say." Then with a struggle between pride and fear, "I doubt not thou wilt make this mad love of thine an excuse for deserting the cause of thy prince."—"No, my liege," answered the youth with a melancholy firmness; "my sovereign's forgetting his duty can never absolve his subject. I will fight beneath thy standard with a wrung, but loyal heart; and though in the anguish of my soul I think you a tyrant, and dare tell you so, never will I whisper such a sound in another ear, or brook to hear it from

another lip."—"Shame, shame," cried Sir Aymer, who had ventured to linger near, "that such faith should meet such guerdon! Call him back, call him back, my liege. How can a son of France bear to be outdone in honour by his liege-man?"

"Royal lord," cried Amirald, returning uncalled, and bending his knee to Lewis, "be generous, and restore the maiden."—"Prince," said Sir Aymer, with unusual spirit—"prince, be just, and wrong not her who saved thy mother's life."

Lewis struggled for a moment with his passions; but, though he could conceive, he had not mental strength to realize their subjection, and, rending his mantle from the grasp of Sir Aymer, he exclaimed, "No, I cannot—by Heaven, I cannot resign her!" and rushed away.—"Courage yet," cried Sir Aymer: "if she is between Heaven and earth, she shall be found; and if found, restored."

Meanwhile, Genevieve had been conveyed by her conductors to a detached and secluded apartment in the lodgings occupied by the Prince and his immediate attendants in the town. Though Lewis resolved to employ only persuasion with his prisoner, he could not carry his generosity farther; but determined, at every risk, to keep her concealed from Sir Amirald. In the mean while he availed himself of every opportunity, which the stormy debates of the Crusaders allowed him, to visit her,—employing all the eloquence of passion and of power, and in violent importunity even prostrating himself before her; her beauty, purity, and unprotected helplessness, alternately urging and disarming him. These visits were the only interruption to her solitude.

It was on the fourth evening of her confinement, that at a late hour the door of her apartment was burst open, and Prince Lewis rushed in; his visage inflamed, and his hair and robes deranged, as if from the consequences of a personal struggle. He gazed on her, and then striking his forehead with an ago-

nizing expression of self-reproach, he exclaimed: "Come with me this moment, maiden—if, indeed, a moment yet be left thee!"—"And whither must I now go?" said Genevieve, as she rose and stood trembling before him.—"Stay not to ask—stay not to speak," he cried; "a moment's delay may cost thy life!"—"My life!" she said, with a faint smile—"is that all? Then, Sir Knight, I quit not this spot:" but her heart recoiling as she spoke, "And am I, indeed, to perish, and so soon?" she said: "and cannot even Sir Amirald save me?"

"Sir Amirald save thee—thee whom a son of France is unable to rescue even for an hour!" exclaimed Lewis. "Frantic and obstinate girl, hear and believe thy peril and *my* shame:—I was this night at a feast held by the Bishop of Toulouse; a feast of reconciliation he termed it—aught but that was in his fiendish thoughts. As we sat, tidings came that some of the most potent lords in Languedoc were taking arms in defence of their vassals, amongst whom the cursed heresy of thy people rages. At the word, every sword sprang from its sheath, every eye was fixed on me, every tongue hailed me champion of the Church—the title for which I would have forfeited life—for which I had well nigh lost it to De Monfort. But even De Monfort ceded his claim; the bishop employed his only to strengthen mine. I believed him all sincere; but the subtle and bloody prelate had been dealing deeply with the Crusaders. He hates thee deadly, maiden, I know not wherefore: he had sworn them to a man: I shame to tell thee, their absurd and savage superstition required that I should yield thee up to perish ere a knight would stand by my banner: they assailed, they implored, they beset me, inflamed as I was with wine, intoxicated with power, and I"——"Yielded," said Genevieve, fixing on him her mild dark eyes. "Alas! Sir Knight; and to honour, to humanity, thou wouldst not yield me, and to the first

call of mad and selfish ambition, 'I am doomed to be the sacrifice!"—"No, by Heaven, maiden," cried Lewis; "scarce had the mad words passed my lips when I retracted them: through menace, through injury, through indignity that I blush to have survived, I burst from their accursed feast. Two of the faithfullest of my train still guard the postern, and will make good the passage with their lives, while I bear thee to some safer retreat, where their ruthless and brutal rage shall be matter of scorn to us. Maiden," he cried, watching her moveless features, fixed in horror at the thought—"maiden, for thee a son of France has forgotten his rank, his rights, himself; and dost thou dare to hesitate who hast nothing to risk? But thou shalt not be allowed the choice."—"Prince," said Genevieve, retreating as he approached her,—"prince, thou gavest thine oath but yesterday, in mercy to my terrors, that I should suffer no further violence at thy hands: I claim that oath now; and as thou hast pledged thine immortal soul, and valuest the pledge, redeem it, and leave me to die."—"And thou, so young, so fair, so gentle," said Lewis, gazing on her with mingled feelings of admiration and agony,—"canst thou brave death—such death as they may prepare for thee?"—"It will be but a few moments of brief torture," said Genevieve hurriedly; "and then—but a few moments indeed," she cried—"I hear them approaching:" and already a tumultuous band was heard surrounding the apartment which we have described as detached, and to which Prince Lewis's flight had pointed their way. Some of them bore torches, and the voice of Sir Ambrose was heard among them, fiercely exclaiming, "Let us burn the heretic harlot with fire," as, with unappeasable rancour against Genevieve, he led the intoxicated party on; while some began to hurl their torches towards the roof, too plainly indicating their horrible purpose. "Dogs, devils as they are," cried Prince Lewis in fury, "they dare not do such out-

rage!"—and he tore open the casement: the flashes of light came thicker and brighter through it.—"Oh! save me, save me!" cried Genevieve, with an involuntary shriek of horror at the prospect of her fearful doom. "But it must be," she said, the heart's dew of agony bursting from every pore of her pale brow—"but it must be! Away, for God's sake, away, lest thou too share my dreadful death!"—"Saints and angels! and canst thou reject life—love—a prince's love, to embrace a fate so horrible? The postern is guarded by our friends: this moment I will bear thee through it; but I cannot alone encounter those hounds of hell."—"And *I must*," said Genevieve, with a ghastly smile: "it will be but a few moments,—a brief agony—better, far better than a life of shame. Away, Prince Lewis, save thy royal life; and if he thou callest Amirald should name me hereafter, tell him I perished unstained and true."—"Thou shalt not perish," cried Lewis, with his most tremendous oath, "*Par le sang des Rois;* in thine own despite I will save thee."—"Amid those cruel men," cried Genevieve, springing from him, "would I rather fling this frail body, than into arms like thine. I shudder at mine horrible death; but I shudder more at thee."—"They must have the power as well as the malignity of the great fiend, if they dare to oppose me," cried Lewis, rushing from the apartment; and wrapping his mantle round his left arm, he flung himself among the assailants. Genevieve looked from the casement: she saw him stagger, sink in the heat and struggle, and borne off insensible.

The chamber was constructed of wood: the roof was already in a blaze, and the burning fragments of the timber were dropping around her. She retreated from them as they fell; but the floor began also to burn, and the shouts or rather yells of her persecutors deepened in her ears. She retreated to the centre of the chamber, but the heat there was suffocat-

ing. She sank on the floor; but started from it, as it scorched her. "Oh!" she cried, as the volumes of smoke rolled towards her—"Oh that they might choke me at once, that this horrid agony might be over! Oh, what those suffer who perish in flames!" she cried, as she attempted to fly from place to place, while the flames gathered strength: but every where the burning touch, the suffocating smoke, repelled her. Her senses gave way; the last distinct impression she retained, was that of sinking into a profound sleep, from which the voice of Amirald tried in vain to arouse her.

CHAPTER XIII.

Come round me, my thousands!

OSSIAN.

THE report which had reached the Crusaders at the feast held by the Bishop of Toulouse, was true. Some of the most powerful lords in Languedoc, among whom were foremost the Counts de Foix and de Comminges, had risen in aid of the Albigeois, and threatened to oppose a formidable barrier to the progress of the Crusaders. Those two lords had been the intimate friends of the Count of Toulouse: they had even had the courage to accompany him to Rome, and advocate his cause before the Pope; but latterly revolted by his imbecile and fluctuating character, incensed by the spoliation of their territories and the slaughter of their vassals, and in fact jealous and trembling for their own diminished wealth and power; after despatching respectful embassies to the Pope, to justify the measures they declared themselves compelled to, they bade their banners fly, and summoned the Albigeois to seek protection beneath them. The first measure they adopted was to seize on some city, which they proposed to fortify, and collecting their troops there, to offer shelter to all the Albigeois who were disposed to avail themselves of it, thus putting an end to the desultory and uneventful warfare which had been hitherto carried on, and assuming a position alike cognizable by friends and enemies. Their standards were soon followed by a numerous band of men-at-arms, and by what the historian terms, '*une foule incroyable*' of the Albigeois, who abandoned by Count Raymond, sought where they could for safety and for life.

These measures were concerted and acted on with such expedition, that the intelligence reached the Crusaders only at the moment of its execution. The place they had fixed on was the worst they could

select—the city of Tarascon. It was in the neighbourhood of Beaucaire, from which the Bishop of Toulouse could always detatch a considerable force against it: it was also commanded by a fortified castle beyond the walls of the town; an edifice spacious enough to contain a host, and strong enough itself to stand a siege the fiercest that that age could lay. The town had been among the first to yield to De Montfort when he overran the territories of the Count of Toulouse in his first rapid career of conquest, and was now held for the Crusaders by Lambert de Limons, a brave and experienced warrior; but his garrison was feeble, the fortifications of the town were equally so, and the houses wholly undefended; for at that period the privilege of having their houses fortified belonged exclusively to the bourgeois of Toulouse and Avignon—a privilege for which they had often paid sufficiently dear. This circumstance, perhaps, determined the inauspicious choice of the leaders of this new army, believing that Tarascon would be an easy prey, but in their march thither they were fated to encounter circumstances still more inauspicious. They were themselves rigid Catholics—so were the men-at-arms they led. The wandering bands of the Albigeois collecting from every quarter, and especially from Toulouse, from which the Count's vacillating creed had once more expelled them, were tenacious of the new faith, and fierce and even bloody contest arose on their progress between the protectors and the protected. The leaders could hardly venture to interfere to check this; and when they did, their interference was repelled by a reference to their mutual creed on the part of their followers.—'Dogs of heretics!' they cried, 'we well deserve such reproach for aiding their cause.' And this was followed not only by increasingly injurious treatment of the Albigeois, but by mutinous murmurs against their leaders. Meanwhile this unhappy people, no less persecuted than persecuting, were perpetually

at war among themselves; for every division and subdivision of opinion was now developed among the multitudes that assembled in every direction,—emigrants from Beaucaire, Toulouse, Nismes, and every place supposed to be infected with heresy; and in the intervals of abuse that they plentifully received from the troops of the Counts de Foix and de Comminges, they employed themselves in as liberally bestowing it on each other; and the terms Petro-brusiens, Henriciens, Catharins, and Patarins, never ceased among the unhappy and distracted multitude; every man upbraiding his comrade and fellow-sufferer, and then making common cause against the catholic troops, who assailed them in turn, and never failed to pay the interest of their debt of sharp words with heavy blows, till the whole band presented the appearance of a mutinous, disarrayed and disorganized multitude, fiercely hating and assaulting each other, accordingly as words or blows might predominate.

The winter had expired, and an early and favourable spring had commenced, when this party, of whose march intelligence, as we have told had reached Toulouse, was approaching the city of Tarascon; and their leaders, anticipating a temporary cessation of their differences, on their arrival at this seat of mutual shelter and defence, urged on their progress with the utmost haste. On their approach, however, to Tarascon, they were struck by the tranquil, defenceless appearance of the city, and halted for a short consultation. They knew the well-proved courage and military skill of Lambert de Limons, who held the town for the Crusaders, and paused to consider whether some danger was not to be dreaded from this singular tranquillity. Their debates were broken in upon by the clamours of the men-at-arms, who were anxious for plunder, and the Albigeois, who were still more anxious for food, of which their military companions had appropriated so large a proportion during their march, that their situation

resembled more that of men besieged by enemies than protected by friends. The leaders consented to the demand, rather than petition, of their tumultuous army; and despatched a band of fifty archers, flanked by as many men-at-arms—all of them expert, chosen men—to reconnoitre the approaches of the town. They returned in safety, but their report was sufficiently mysterious and unsatisfactory; and when the Counts de Foix and de Comminges put their forces in motion, and approached the town, singular as it was, they found it verified. Not a banner waved on the walls—not a warder stood on tower or bartizan—not a horn was blown from the gates—the town had no moat, save on one side, and the gates lay open in silent and portentous invitation.

All that day the army lay before the walls, but it seemed as a city of the dead. As evening fell, the impetuosity of the troops would no longer be restrained: the leaders yielded to it, and the whole army burst into the city, followed fast by the Albigeois. Streets, houses, churches, square, and citadel, were all empty; nor man nor beast was to be found wherever they might turn. The earth returned nothing but the sound of their own steps—the air nothing but the echo of their own voices. There was now no restraining the troops; they wandered, pillaged, ravaged, and revelled through every street in Tarascon; and ample booty was there to excite and satiate their cupidity. Rich garments, household stuff and plate, appeared displayed in ostentatious profusion; and with these the men-at-arms hasted to equip themselves, appearing in their new and multifarious array something like Trinculo and Stephano in their stolen robes, while the spirit which laid the glittering bait was waiting to pursue and punish them for the trespass. The half famished Albigeois betook themselves to the provisions that they found spread with equal and mysterious plenty in the empty houses; and ere

night fell, all had feasted on the viands, and arrayed themselves in the garments they found in the deserted city.

Meanwhile the Counts de Foix and Comminges had drawn their immediate band of knights and gentlemen into the citadel; and still not wholly unsuspicious of some treachery, they searched every apartment and passage, till at length they conceived themselves sufficiently safe; and, finding rich viands and costly wines in the citadel, they sat down to banquet at their leisure. Their spirits rose as they feasted and drank; they pledged each other deeply; and, in pride of their strange and sudden achievement of the possession of the town of Tarascon, were clasping each other's hands at every pledge, when a trumpet was blown on the sudden, and an armed knight rushed in almost along with the sound. The Count de Foix and his companion started up at the intrusion, believing it to be some knight of their train. The stranger raised his visor, and disclosed a face which both of them remembered to have beheld, but neither could clearly recollect where.

'I am to crave your pardon, lords,' said the youthful knight, 'for mine intrusion; and next, to announce tidings of high concernment!'—'Thy tidings should indeed be of importance to justify such intrusion. Speak, then!' said De Foix, standing with his hand on his dagger as he spoke.—'Thine employers have sent but a weak instrument to sound their challenge,' said Comminges.—'Then hear it to-morrow from the trumpets of the Crusaders,' said the youth, 'who ere dawn will invest your towers! Such are my tidings; brook them how ye list.'

De Foix and De Comminges started to their feet. 'These be stirring tidings indeed!' exclaimed the former. 'And where gottest thou them? and what be thy credentials—thy pledge?'—'My life!' said the youth with proud confidence: 'I have

placed that in your hands; and as ye find me to have spoken the truth, so deal with me. The army of the Crusaders is on its march; they will be beneath your walls to-morrow; and hang me from the highest turret of your citadel, if by dawn ye find not my tidings, which I have risked life to bear, true!'—'And who art thou that bearest such tidings? and who commissioned thee to bear them?' said De Foix.—'Ay, ask him that!' said De Comminges.—'My lords,' said the young knight, 'I must say that the reception I have met with is lacking, not only in noble courtesy, but in the wisdom I might seek in chiefs like you. I bear you tidings of high import—I pledge my life on their truth—and ye seek my name and title? If that be warrantage, I tell ye, peers of France, that I have right to the *cri d'armes*,* being a knight banneret, knighted by your liege sovereign and mine, King Philip, on the field of battle.'

De Foix and De Comminges whispered together, and looked at him as they whispered. 'Wast thou not one of that godless band,' said De Foix, 'who wore the cross on their breast, but trampled it under their feet?'—'I have transferred it from my breast to my heart,' said Amirald; 'and there I trust it will remain.'

'And what motive hast thou for such change?' said De Foix suspectingly. 'We rise in aid of our despoiled vassals, our ravaged territories; but thou, a landless, birthless youth, to all seeming—what motive hath urged thee to such enterprise?'—'My lords,' said the youth blushing, his youthful grace and modest mien making strong contrast with the half-recumbent posture, scowling brow, and flushed but stern visage of the querist, 'my lords, is this noble!—is it generous to press on a stranger's private thoughts? Believe it, that the motive must

*'Une autre distinction des *bannerets* étoit d'avoir *cry d'armes*.' Velly, vol. iv.

have been powerful that could produce such change: I will say no more.'

'If thine intelligence be true,' said De Foix, 'thou canst tell us how the Crusaders have marshalled their array?'—'De Montfort,' replied Amirald, 'hath marshalled them in three bands, in honour of the Holy Trinity: the Dauphin leads the centre, the Bishop of Toulouse the left wing, and De Montfort himself the right.' De Foix and his companions interchanged looks, as if their suspicions began to be removed. 'But, lords, my tidings are not yet told: a powerful ally, as well as a fierce enemy is in the field—Count Raymond of Toulouse is marching hither.'—'Sir stranger knight,' said De Comminges, 'thou taskest our credulity too far. Know we not that Raymond of Toulouse is paying his devotions before the doors of every church in his territories—because he dares not enter them? and causing prayers to be said for his reconciliation with the holy father?'—'And know ye not also the holy father's answer to his last embassy: '*Mon fils, écoutez-moi, aimez Dieu sur toute chose, ne prenez jamais les Biens d'autrui; mais defendez le votre, si quelqu'un veut vous l'enlever;*'* and that, on the faith of that message, Count Raymond is already at the head of a potent army, and making towards Tarascon with his utmost speed?'—'This seems like truth,' said De Foix.—'*Seems*,' cried Amirald. 'Now, by Heaven, lords, I will no longer brook these wrongs: trust me, or slay me on the spot!'

De Foix was about to return a fierce answer, and Comminges to interpose, when a loud tumult was heard at the entrance, and some of De Foix's attendants rushed in, dragging, or rather carrying among them the ghastly figure of a man apparently wasted by disease, but who neither offered resistance, nor attempted supplication. 'My lord,' they

* These words were addressed by Pope Honorius, I believe, to the son of Count Raymond.

cried, in answer to the questions eagerly hurried on them, 'we found this fellow concealed in a private passage near this chamber; we have brought him hither, and perchance he can tell the cause of this city's strange abandonment, and why, of the thousands that swarmed here but two days past, he alone was found, and found concealed.'—'Speak, fellow, for thy life!' said de Foix, turning fiercely on the ghastly wretch.—'My life!—not for that,' said the prisoner, with an energy of voice and manner singularly contrasted with the squalid debility of his appearance: 'but I *will* speak, and ye shall find my words are true as the words of the dying are ever. Lambert de Limons the governor of the town, withdrew his garrison from these walls on the report of your approach, and he hath thrown himself into the castle of Tarascon, which he purposes to hold for the Crusaders, whose arrival he expects by to-morrow's dawn.'—'This confirms the stranger knight's report,' said de Comminges.—'It needed not *such* confirmation,' said Amirald with some disdain.—'And the inhabitants of the town?' said De Foix.—'They dispersed on the garrison's being withdrawn.'—'And wherefore didst thou tarry here alone?'—'I was unable to follow them; and if I were, it was my wish to stay: my reasons you will know ere long,' replied the prisoner, with an expression somewhat sinister.—'Hast thou aught else to disclose?' said De Foix.—'Tidings that should be welcome to you, noble lords,' said the man with a portentous smile: 'and yet methinks you will scarce have heart to welcome them when they are fulfilled.' 'Tell them plainly,' said De Foix; 'and forbear, if thou canst, that leer that suits so ill the features of a dying wretch like thee.'—'Men say,' answered the prisoner, 'that Raymond of Toulouse is marching hither; and that the incarnate fiend, in form of a knight in sable armour, fights by his side. However that be, Lambert de Limons thought better, with his small garrison, to maintain the castle than

the town, whose defences were destroyed when Simon de Montfort won it from the Count of Toulouse.'—'Sir Stranger knight,' said De Foix eagerly, 'we cry you mercy for our unseasonable mistrust, and gladly accept the proffered aid of your arms and counsel.'

Amirald took the hand of the Count, who accompanied his words with the suitable action, and grasped it with an energy that made him feel the pledge was given for life and death. His finely modulated temper, like a piece composed by some skilful musician, admitted a passing discord for a moment, only to swell and enrich the succeeding harmony, 'Now, my lords,' he said, 'shall we not set forth by to-morrow's dawn? A *sortie* from these towers would at least check the Crusaders; and if we succeeded in turning their flanks, perchance by that time the army of Raymond of Toulouse may arrive, and thus they will be enclosed between two fires. A sortie, noble lords, by the dawn, and I will yield to the first lance levelled against me, an' we do not win the day against De Montfort and his triple host, were they trebled again.'—'Sir stranger knight, thou sayest well,' answered De Foix; 'but our men-at-arms are now scattered through the town in quest of pillage. We will summon them back on the instant: they have, I warrant me, scarce left a meal untasted or a garment untried in the town. They must be recalled to their standards within the hour, and by dawn we charge from these walls.'—'Is it true,' said the prisoner,' that your troops have partaken of the food, and clothed themselves with the garments they found within these walls?' No one heeded him; while the Count De Foix loudly issued his orders for recalling the men-at-arms from their dispersion through the town. The prisoner then repeated his demand in a hollow voice, but with an expression of eagerness indescribable. 'And dost thou ask, fellow,' said De Foix, issuing orders, —'dost thou ask whether men-at-arms will seize

on the spoil of a deserted town; or whether the starved Albigeois will not snatch a meal where he can find it?'—As he spoke, his back was to the prisoner, but he suddenly turned on hearing a wild and fierce shriek of exultation:—'Then are they death-doomed every man, did each possess the strength of an hundred giants! The town was visited by the plague; Lambert de Limons withdrew his garrison in terror; and the infected and unprotected inhabitants wandered where they might: but they left behind them pledges of their good-will towards their expected guests. Every morsel that ye have tasted is death—every garment that ye have but touched is deadly as mortal poison. Now rejoice at the speedy succour of Count Raymond. Ha, ha! he will be greeted by your livid corses: or by your spirits parting in torture: and I—I remained alone to tell the enemies of God their fate, and to die.' The breathless silence that followed this terrible communication was itself as terrible. It did not, however, continue long. 'Die, then! accursed fiend,' cried De Foix with an ungovernable impulse of fury and horror: and he plunged his dagger to the hilt in the body of the prisoner, who fell without a groan. He fell on his face; but in a few moments, by convulsive exertions, he turned himself on his back as he lay, and tearing open his garment, pointed to the livid spots on his breast, and, glaring at his murderer, with an unutterable smile, expired.

Amirald, who like the rest had stood dumb and stupified with horror, now felt a sting of agonizing consciousness thrill through frame and soul, and striking his forehead, and uttering with a sob of despair the single word 'Genevieve,' he rushed from the apartment. On his reaching the citadel that disastrous night, he had placed her under the care of his two 'squires (to which his retinue was now diminished) in the antechamber, while he passed on to impart his tidings, and offer his aid to the leaders. There he now found her seated, in a re-

tired nook, with her veil folded round her, silently shrinking from the rude gaze of the armed attendants of the count, as they hastily traversed the chamber. He stood some moments in irresolute agony; but when, at length beholding her young protector again, she rose, and with a sweet and timid confidence extended her arms towards him, he thought his heart would burst: he rushed towards her, and in a brief and shuddering whisper communicated the terrible intelligence of their danger.

Genevieve for a moment trembled, and recoiled in natural horror; but in the next she said, in a voice tremulous indeed, but which announced invincible resolution, 'Then I will seek my poor old father, and we will perish together.' It was in vain that Amirald, with all the agony of a lover, expostulated, implored, and finally menaced to detain her. 'Thou wilt not use force,' she said with resolute mildness; 'and to naught but force will I yield in this thing. Noble knight, gentle friend,' she added, 'withstand me not; I will not be counselled.'

Amirald adjured her by her only chance for safety, to remain in the citadel, as she was yet free from infection, having neither tasted the food nor touched the raiment since her arrival.

As he pleaded, some of the more respectable of the Albigeois came to solicit the protection of the Counts against the tyranny and rapacity of the men-at-arms, who were taking from them their provisions, and otherwise abusing and plundering them. As these men struggled through the tumultuous and insulting opposition of the men-at-arms who crowded the apartment, a voice was heard exclaiming, 'Smite me not, I pray thee! I am old and blind, and lack a guide to aid me.' Genevieve sprang forward at the sound, and in a moment locked her arms round the neck of the aged Pierre, and sobbed in mingled joy and agony on his breast: while the old man, recognizing her in the same moment, held her to his heart with a sense of pleasure so oppres-

sive and overpowering that it was almost converted into pain. The others who filled the apartment were unfit spectators of such a scene: they gazed incuriously for a time, and then began to utter coarse jests on the meeting, till Amirald forced his way among them, and fiercely repelled the rude circle. But such was the tumult and distraction in the citadel of Tarascon, the tidings of infection spreading fast, that it was only by dint of manual force, seconded by that of his 'squires, that the knight succeeded in securing a small and remote chamber in the citadel for Genevieve and the pastor; where he left his attendants to protect them, and hastened back to take part in the troubled and distracted councils of the Counts de Foix and de Comminges during the short remainder of that dreary night.

Meanwhile the pastor and his daughter sat in their still, remote chamber in a state of pure delight, which not even the sense of near and mortal danger could disturb. The thought made their meeting solemn, but not sad. 'And why dost thou quit my side, Genevieve?' said the old man, extending his arms towards her.—'It was to bring the lamp nearer my father.'—'But I can feel thee without it.'—'But I cannot see you, my father, in this dusky chamber filled with arms. Alas! how you are changed, my father!'—'Regard it not, my child, but haste to tell me all that hath befallen thee, and how thou hast been restored to me; for my heart forebodes that, surrounded as we are by pestilence and war, these are the last and only moments in which it will be allowed me to listen to thy voice, and to feel thy hands in mine.'

Genevieve began her tale, but often paused, palliated, and omitted when the theme was her own danger. But it was observable even to Pierre, that when the name of Sir Amirald mingled in her story, her voice became free, her language fluent and unhesitating, and her narrative most minute and circumstantial. She told of her deliverance from the

flames by *him*, who, at the risk of his life, had borne her through them; and then, almost unaided, charged on her persecutors with one arm, while he sustained his senseless burthen in the other. In her narrative she could not but contrast the daring courage and faithful love of Amirald with the selfish and violent passion of the Dauphin, who had persecuted her while in his power, and abandoned her to her horrible fate when he found his interest with the Crusaders was compromised by her presence. 'But, oh! my father, hadst thou seen him—his noble daring, his gentle courage! It would be worth a miracle to restore thy sight, were it but to view that form so lovely and noble.'—'But, my child,' said the old man, 'it was of thee I wished to hear: what is the comely favour of that youth to me? Go on, my daughter: he guided thee to Toulouse (as thou saidst was thy intendment) in safety and honour?'—'Alas! yes, my father: but when I arrived there, all things were changed. Our kinswoman Merab, with whom I hoped to sojourn, had obeyed the new injunctions of Count Raymond, and professed the ancient faith: the count himself assisted at mass, and enjoined it on all his subjects during his negotiation with the Pope. Our kinswoman was a widow with many children: she gazed for a space on the gems I offered her to shelter me; but then she looked at her children, and averting her head that she might not see me, pointed to the open door. I was then a wanderer in the streets of Toulouse: and oh! how I rejoiced to find that the most powerful feeling of my persecutors was their avarice! But my ransom soon left me poor; for when Sir Amirald bore me from that burning chamber, I left in a cabinet, where I had hid them, the most costly jewels of the queen's gift. It was darkling when I sheltered me within the shadow of a church where they were singing mass or vespers. Soon a glare of torches flashed on me where I lay concealed, and I saw the powerful preacher, the mighty warrior Mat-

tathias, borne from judgment to the prison, there to abide his doom; for Count Raymond had resolved to sacrifice to the Pope's demands the chief among his once highly favoured Albigeois. The torches, held by some ghastly wretches, blazed in the front of the procession, and then came Mattathias. He was to be consigned to prison for two days; and if within that period he did not submit to the ancient faith, he was to be burnt with fire. As he passed me, his stern and ghastly features spoke aught but faith or hope: they had that fixed expression that spoke not spiritual, but physical power; not the zeal of the martyr, but the strength of the man. 'I always judged him what thou hast spoken him,' said Pierre: 'and moreover he was the cause of thy banishment from the congregation. He rent the last green leaf from the sapless trunk—he quenched the light of the blind. I have tried to forgive him, and I have sometimes thought I had done so; but I dared not search my heart. Yet fear not thou, my child; there are none now to oppose return. Boanerges is now a mighty warrior clad in mail: and Amand——' 'Oh, what of him?' said Genevieve fearfully.—'Didst thou love him, my child, that thou speakest with such earnestness?'—'Alas! no, my father; but we sometimes dread more to hear the fate of those who hated, than of those who have loved us.'—'He wandered about among us, after thy departure, heavy and silent: a bad and restless spirit seemed to be at work within him. On our way hither, he disappeared; and no one knows what hath befallen him—no one, methinks, inquired. But tell me, my child, the end of the hard-hearted and hard-fated Mattathias.'—'Oh, my father, it was fearful. I sought him in his prison, near his last moments, and then the faith for which he had been so zealous failed! He doubted that he had ever believed. The soul tried to drop her anchor, but found no bottom; and went on drifting her dim and stormy way, almost a wreck. He called on me to

join him in prayer and hymns. I sang and prayed, but he said there was no meaning in the sounds: and then to see his fixed ghastly eyes, the cold drops on his forehead, and his strong frame heaving with its throes, like a mountain moved by an earthquake! His pride upheld him, and he died the death of a martyr, but without a martyr's faith or hope. To my dying hour never can I forget his.' Pierre shuddered at the awful picture. 'But my fears were soon awakened for myself. My visits to the prison were watched; there was no safety then in Toulouse for those of our faith; and again I owed my deliverance to the care and valour of Sir Amirald. But when I had escaped from the city, and my protector asked where I was about to direct my flight, I looked around me and on him in mute and utter helplessness, for I knew not that spot on earth where I might turn my steps in safety. At length I bethought me of the report that the Albigeois were betaking themselves to this city of Tarascon; and I said that I would repair hither, that I might share the lot of my people; and, if they perished, perish with them. As I spoke, his countenance seemed suddenly to glow with a light from Heaven. 'Maiden,' he said, 'the faith that can prompt and sustain a woman in trials like thine, caanot be heresy, cannot be error. I will be thy companion, thy protector, thy friend, the partaker of thy faith, and the champion of thy cause: thy people shall be my people; and thy God my God."'—Pierre clasped his hands in ecstasy, and blessed her. 'As we journeyed hither,' continued Genevieve, 'I endeavoured humbly, as became an unlettered maiden, to explain to him those glorious truths that form the substance of our purer creed; and was it not wondrous, my father, that from lips like mine he would hear those truths which perchance he would have rejected, if expounded to him by the most learned of our teachers?'—Pierre smiled in silence; for though he set a value sufficiently high on his own

controversial powers, he could not help internally admitting that, to a handsome and enamoured youth, the lips of female beauty were capable of making things intelligible which would be heard with indifference from the voice of masculine orthodoxy. Zealous, however, for every dogma of his faith, he inquired into the course of argument she had adopted with her catechumen, in hope of discovering that the impression it had made was not, as might be expected, partial, temporary, and superficial.—'I know not how it was,' said Genevieve in her simplicity; 'I spoke but now and then, not long or continuously; and methought nature, and the objects that presented themselves as we journeyed, seemed to take a kindly and aidful part with me. Once, I remember, when I saw him smile, (though he suppressed his smile,) at the thought that an unskilled and unlettered peasant should handle such high themes, I ventured to demand of him whether, when lonely and benighted, he had not often been cheered by the light glancing from the casement of the cottager: a light denied by the barred though lofty windows of a castled hold. And once more, as we passed near a mountain-torrent, that after its stormy fall wound quietly through the valley, he spoke with scorn of our humble and obscure estate, and proudly and painfully contrasted it with that lofty course to which his early hopes had aspired: 'I told him, that men gazed on the cataract as it thundered from the cliff, but drank of its waters only when they rested on the plain.'—'It is well, my child,' said Pierre; 'but tell me, mine own Genevieve, didst thou search thine heart, and was it clear in this matter? Thou hast painted to me the youth's favour as goodly beyond that of the sons of men; and of a truth his bearing towards thee might have made even deformity gracious in thy sight. But did no illusion of earthly and profane passion mingle with thy hope and thy toil for his conversion? Didst thou seek to win him to thy faith, or to win him to thy-

self?'—'Not now,' said Genevieve hastily, while a slight suffusion of womanly pride and shame tinged her cheek, and she blushed as though her father could have beheld her. 'I might have had such a thought—such a dream; but, alas! my father, though in the first impulse of his noble heart he sacrificed all for me, I see every hour he repents the sacrifice; and though he would hide it from me, methinks I could almost better bear his reproaches than his silence. Never did we pass a lordly castle, but he gave a sigh to the recollection of the martial sport of the tourney; its noble guerdon, dealt by proud barons and high-descended dames. Never did we pass a church, but he sighed for the pomp of the ancient faith, where kneeling nobles received the benison of the lordly and mitred prelates; where the feet trod on the dust of princes, and the armed effigies on their tombs made the very marble eloquent of the fame of chivalry. Thus would he speak, and I wept. He saw it, and forbore to speak; and I wept the more.'—'Enough, my child,' said Pierre: 'I grieve that I probed the wound, whose cure, I see, will soon be wrought by another hand. The young knight's neglect will soon dissolve the fairy pile in which thou, poor dreamer, didst empalace thyself.'—'It matters not,' said Genevieve with a kind of heroic melancholy, hastily drying her eyes—'it matters not; he bears a good sword to the cause of the Albigeois, and a true heart to their faith. For me, my wanderings are at a close; hither have I come, and come at length to die.—'Not so, my daughter,' said Pierre; 'for since I have met thee, methinks the love of life hath rekindled even within me.'—'But I have no wish for life,' said Genevieve, all her resolution giving way before the keen anguish his last words had excited. 'Oh, my father, I feel and know it is easier to meet death in flames and agony, than to encounter him under the withering aspect of a broken and hopeless heart.' 'Genevieve,' said the old man solemnly, and he seiz-

ed the moment of strong emotion, and tried powerfully and successfully to lead her mind back to the sole topic in which his own centred and terminated ever, and both found the change for the better, and themselves bettered by the change.

The themes on which they spoke gradually raised them above the sense of mortal suffering and of mortal fear. They spoke of grief, but they no longer spoke with tears. The daylight broke on their sad and holy conference; and their exhausted frames alike requiring rest, the pastor slumbered where he sat; and Genevieve, as she was wont in early days, sat on the ground, and resting her head on the pastor's knees, slept, resolved not to dream of Amirald.

CHAPTER XIV.

The combat deepens. On ye brave
Who rush to glory, or the grave!
Wave, Munich! all thy banners wave,
And charge with all thy chivalry!
CAMPBELL.

The morning broke on the city of Tarascon, and found it in tumult and consternation. The disunion between the ill-organized men at-arms, and the heretics, whom they reluctantly protected, (but very willingly plundered,) was increased by the report of the pestilence being in the town, and all was distraction, mutiny, and pillage.

De Comminges inclosed himself in the citadel, and refused to hold communion even by letter with De Foix or his retainers, pretending dread of the pestilence; while his men were pillaging through the town, giving themselves up to all the desperation of sailors in a wreck, who break open lockers, dress themselves in the officers' clothes, and practise every kind of mad extravagance on the ap-

proach of their dreadful and inevitable doom. Sickening at all he saw, and hopeless in heart of all that might succeed, Sir Amirald nevertheless rode forth at dawn to reconnoitre the advance of the enemy. As he rode through the streets to the gate of Tarascon, the sounds of distant violence and uproar struck on his ear at every moment, where the fierce followers of the counts were committing acts of the wildest outrage and hostility. As he reached the gate, a kerchief was waved to him from a casement. Believing it to be a signal of distress, he reined in his steed and looked upward; and for a moment he saw the heavenly face of Genevieve, as, once more waving her kerchief she retired from the casement. On the door were inscribed the terrible characters, *Domine, miserere nobis*, and Amirald felt with agony unutterable how and where she was employed. For a moment his courage failed; he tried to rouse himself, but in vain: then at the image of this humble solitary female, at risk of life engaged in duty that she knew to be mortal, a gush of magnanimity overflowed his heart; and while (for a moment) he wept like woman, he felt more than man. 'I have seen that heavenly face for the last time,' he said with emotion, setting spurs to his steed; he dashed a tear away, and rode up the hill that neighboured the walls of Tarascon, to observe the approach of the enemy. It was not yet day, but something like a heavy cloud lay on the hills; and Sir Amirald, by the increasing light, could soon descry a vast body of troops in motion. He rode back to the city on the instant, and sought De Foix first, as De Comminges was, he deemed, inaccessible. But close beside the gates, he found both the counts at the head of their array, and both at deadly feud. 'This is the issue of thy mad counsel,' cried Comminges; 'here are we hemmed in between a foe without the walls, and a pestilence within.'—'And where be thy men-at-arms to meet the peril?' replied De Foix.—'They are

pillaging through the town. Thy is thy *foi Poictevin;*'*—'Rude lord, say that again, and my men-at-arms shall charge against thine!'—'At thy peril!' shouted the other; while he called to his banner-man, 'Turn thy standard! we march back to the city of Tarascon.'—'In Heaven's name, lords,' cried Amirald, riding up, 'suspend your feud. The enemy hangs like a thunder-cloud on your hills; and here ye stand rending each other like two blood-hounds, instead of rushing together at the prey. Look yonder, and see if I speak true!' De Foix and De Comminges turned their bloodshot and angry eyes from each other to the view of the advancing enemy, who were now indeed seen gathering on the hills like a storm. They gazed for a moment on the formidable sight with a kind of stupor (which was, however, wholly unmixed with fear;) and then, slowly drawing their suspended breath, and loosing hold of the daggers, which they held half-drawn, they turned on each other looks of mutual shame for their paltry and disgraceful broil.

Sir Amirald took advantage of this silent advance to reconciliation, and again pointed out the approach of the force, that excited, while it *almost* awed him, in language not unlike that of a more powerful poet than ever knight troubadour was—

> 'Their gilt coats show like dragons' scales—
> Their march like a rough tumbling storm.'†

Their appearance was indeed terrific to all but eyes accustomed to look on war. The centre of the crusaders was led by Prince Lewis in person, and over his head was displayed the oriflamme of France, grasped by the same bold hand that had upheld it in the battle of Bovines; for at this period it was customary to crown the heir of France in his father's lifetime (to insure the succession;) and the Dauphin therefore marched to battle in all the insignia of anticipated royalty.

* A term then equivalent to *Punica fides.*
† Beaumont and Fletcher.

But the array of Prince Lewis was all loose and disorderly: a number of light females travelled in the midst of his van; and the prince was so attentive to their accommodation, that he detached a large body of his troops to the rear, to secure their safety; while he was forever quitting his post to hold talk with the bonnibelles, amid whom his fool danced, laughed, rang his bells, and proclaimed himself the chief of the host, inasmuch as he led them who led their leader. This disarray was marked by the keen eye of Sir Amirald, and he hasted to make his advantage of it. The left wing was led by the Bishop of Toulouse, who, though invincibly brave, and profoundly skilful in the tactics of the age, could not be safely entrusted with the command of even a portion of an army; his ambitious selfishness always leading him to some desperate enterprise, by which he might himself be distinguished, were it at the loss of ten thousand lives; so that, if in a day of assault, he stood alone on some tower that was deemed impregnable, and shouted his war-cry in the voice of victory, he cared not if it pealed over the dead bodies of every follower he had led to slaughter. The position he had taken this day savoured strongly of his character: he led the left wing, which was of course opposed to the right of the city of Tarascon. On that side flowed a branch of the Rhone; and there the fortifications were neglected, the inhabitants relying on the protection of the river, and the difficulty of approaching the town. Thither the bishop was resolved to urge his forces, and make a desperate attempt, careless what befel the centre of the host or the right wing (which was led by the Count De Montfort,) provided he could first plant the banner of the Crusaders on the battlements of Tarascon. The right wing was still more inauspiciously generalled for the event of the day. De Montfort was at its head; but he was no longer the redoubtable De Montfort—the resistless champion of the armies of the Church. The wounds

he had received, which were principally in his head, had evidently weakened his powers, while they had inflamed his passions. The slightest contradiction maddened him; the most trifling opposition to his will was met by the menance of lance or dagger. He seemed to be under the alternate, or rather mingled influence of delirium and stupor. He issued orders, and revoked them; gave the most absurd commands; seemed conscious of it—but was furious if they were disobeyed. Those under his command knew not what to do, or what he would have them do; and all predicted, by their briefly exchanged looks and whispers, a disastrous event to the battle, if De Montfort, their former Maccabee, led the right wing that day.

On that day, as the historian* informs us, he appeared eminently under the influence of his morbid and portentous habits: he had refused to march without first participating in the sacrament, which he termed seeing his Lord and Saviour, as if he had a presentiment of some mortal event; and when his wish was complied with, he seemed rather more agitated, and his whole conduct and manner were those of one whom our northern neighbours would call *fey*, that is, one hurried on by supernatural impulse to his fate, and not unconscious of the impulse himself. He forced on the right wing rapidly, as if to intercept all communication between the castle of Tarascon (which lay to the left of the city) and the city itself; thus demonstrating that the post was of some importance by his movement, though the opposed forces could not yet imagine why: while the bishop, intent on *his* purpose, urged on the left wing with still greater rapidity, careless how he weakened the main body, provided he succeeded in seizing on that part of the city which he well knew to be the least defensible. The centre, thus weakened by the elongation, or rather total detachment of

* See l'Histoire des Vaudois.

its wings, was in still greater confusion from the surprise into which Prince Lewis and the fiery knights around him were thrown, at seeing a band, whom they had believed cooped up and shrinking within their city, marching forth in fair array to give them battle before its walls. 'What,' cried the Dauphin to the lords that rode round his standard, 'have these wolves, that we have hunted to their den, rushed forth to make prey of us?'—'Ar'n't like your grace,' said old Sir Aymer: 'those wolves have fangs that will snap the stoutest lances in your host.'—'I like not gray-beards to prate of battle,' said the Dauphin, scornfully reining back his steed, as if to shun the voice of the unwelcome speaker. —'Nor I,' said Sir Aymer on his part,—'nor I, boys, to dream of heading hosts,'—'Peace, Sir Aymer, peace!' cried the standard-bearer, who stood justly high in the favour of the Dauphin: 'the cloud that is spreading on yon plain hath somewhat overshadowed Prince Lewis's memory of thy worth.' —'And if report says true,' answered Sir Aymer, 'the cloud that is gathering on yon hills will turn that shadow into night, ere it be noon.' And he pointed with emphatic gesture to the hills, whence a rumour had reached the Crusaders that Raymond of Toulouse was approaching with the embodied fiend among his host; nor did the terror of this wild report, in those ages, at all impair its authenticity or its effect.

'Who is that boy?' said Prince Lewis, proudly turning to his followers, 'who rides careering in their van? He is neither herald nor pursuivant by his garb. Go thou,' to one of his pages, 'and ask if he be warder of yon towers: go tell him we will spare him farther pains to guard them within in an hour.' The page (who was an esquire of noble birth) bowed to his steed's mane, set spurs, and rode. In a short space—whilst Prince Lewis was laughing between a youthful knight, who counselled him to ride on and trample on the host, as peasants tread

their vintage, and a fair dame, who was patting the proud neck of his war-steed with her white hand, —the page rode back at full speed, but stood silent. 'Speak on,' said the Dauphin, 'without fear, and without offence.'

'My liege,' answered the page, 'the youth is somewhat insolent; and saith, if you are fatigued in taking his place of warder of the towers of Tarascon, your brows shall be wiped by his hand in such wise that you will never have to undergo such toil again. —'Lords, gentlemen, noble knights, do you hear such message done to a son of France!' cried the fiery Dauphin. 'What say you?'—'On, on, to the fight!' cried a thousand voices; and twice that number of lances were put in rest, and of swords drawn and flashing round the oriflamme of France. 'Send forth the archers and slingers first!' cried Sir Aymer, riding up by the Dauphin's side.—'Churlish knight, I disdain thee and thy counsel!'—exclaimed Prince Lewis, spurring his steed.—'Upon them, lords—upon them, on the instant!' Sir Aymer laid his hand on the Dauphin's rein; the fierce Prince smote it with his battle-axe, and the old knight held it up bleeding: 'This will not be the last blood I will shed in thy cause to-day, Prince Dauphin,' he cried, as he spurred on his steed with the rest, holding the reins with his bleeding hand. Sir Amirald marked the confusion of the host, and rode at full speed back to that which was advancing from the city of Tarascon.

The full array of the troops of the Counts de Foix and de Comminges was more formidable than could be apprehended by their adversaries. The intense zeal of the Albigeois had induced them to submit to the military discipline of their Catholic leaders, (however they might detest their creed,) and the stout peasantry, already well skilled in the use of the bow and sling, were placed in front of the host, thus supplying the *mat riel* of the van of a feudal army, (which always consisted of slingers

and archers,) and feeling their experience more than an equivalent for the military tact which was supposed the exclusive possession of feudal vassals. Moreover, there were amongst them many (and Boanerges at their head) whose strong frames and muscular power easily bore the weight of arms, and wielded the weapons of the practised militarist; their zeal, eagerness, and perseverance supplying every deficiency of practice and habit. Undeterred by ridicule, unappalled by novelty, and undaunted by danger—rigid, cold, but submissive and watchful, they easily caught the simple tactics of the age, their very creed supplying a motive which was wanted by the mercenary pelerins and the feudal military vassals, and formed a powerful and formidable addition to the troops who had at first despised their inexperience, and undervalued their aid. Besides these, the troops of De Foix and De Comminges were swelled by the accession of the armed bands of many a powerful lord of Languedoc: and De Foix had (apparently to the foe) doubled the number of knights in his army, by causing every knight to bear *two* banners; a *ruse* by which Henry of Winchester, a few years after, won a battle from the King of France.

The battle of the two counts was thus arrayed, when Sir Amirald reined up his panting steed by that of De Foix. 'My noble lords,' said he, 'some disorder prevails in the centre of the host. Mark, too,' he added, pointing with rapid and emphatic gesture, 'how fast the wings are marching away! Seize, seize the moment, noble De Foix, valiant Comminges: grant me but fifty men-at arms to break their battle, and if I do not scatter their puny defence of archers and slingers, and lay my hand on the Dauphin's rein ere a follower be lost, may there be not one left to bestride my corse!'—'Thou shalt have them,' said De Foix; 'and if thou break their battle, youth, I will follow with a wedge of men-at-

that shall split yon oak of the field till it groan and totter.'

At a signal, fifty men-at-arms were detached from his train. 'Haste, fellows, haste,' cried Amirald,—'haste, that we may win advantage of the sun and wind, which the van of Prince Lewis is marching to gain! Haste, such advantage won the battle of Bovines!' He shouted at the top of his voice; a hundred gathered round him as he rode. 'By heaven,' cried De Foix, 'this boy will teach us generalship! On!' he cried: 'St Denis to aid, though thou fightest against his banner! Spur and speed be the word!'—'Win thy spurs, boy,' said Commingeş coldly.—'They were won in a bloodier field than ever the Count de Comminges fought in,' cried the youth, spurring his steed. 'Boy! my deeds shall prove me man to-day!' And as he spoke, he and his band parted like lightning from a cloud. De Foix and his associate meanwhile took brief counsel how they might best avail themselves of the obvious disunion that appeared to prevail among the host of the Crusaders. On the sudden—'While we are talking,' cried De Foix, 'all is done: look, noble De Comminges!' His companion threw his eyes in the direction, and saw

> The fiery youth with desperate charge
> Make for a space an opening large—*

and, trampling down the faint resistance of the slingers and archers, who had not even time to draw the short swords with which they were to support the charge of the chivalry, penetrate almost to where the knights of the royal train surrounded Prince Lewis, while the oriflamme shook in the standard-bearer's grasp at the successful temerity of the assault. The assault was indeed successful; but Sir Amirald and his band, after their fierce force was spent, were repelled, and recoiled like a wave from

* Scott.

a rock, retreating in foam and shivers, but rallying for the return even in the retreat. They were nobly upheld: De Foix and De Comminges gave their steeds the rein, and, lowering their heads to shun the sling-stones and arrows, they 'charged with all their chivalry' in aid of Sir Amirald: half way he met them, like a spent swimmer on a wave; 'Once more, once more,' he gasped, 'noble De Foix, noble De Comminges, and the day is ours: the Dauphin's band is all disarrayed; the wings wander wide.'—'Seize the Dauphin, and the day and the field is ours,' cried De Foix, spurring faster. 'What, boy, doth thy mettle fail now?'

Amirald's heart burned and bled at the thought of meeting the Crusaders as a foe; but the din of battle had stunned his ears, and the flame of fight was glowing in his eyes: he bowed his head, couched his lance, and spurred fiercely on with the rest. The first essay of Sir Amirald had broken and scattered the centre of the Crusaders; and now, on that broken and scattered array, the furious assault of the confederate Counts had its full effect: they charged, retired for a moment, wheeled and charged again, leaving at every attack as many corses behind them as blows had been struck.

The Crusaders, who at first had almost scorned to exchange blows with their assailants, now began to gather round the oriflamme, to shield the sacred life of the Prince, leaving their men-at-arms to be slaughtered and trampled down without regard. The Dauphin himself, too late aware of the presumption and temerity that always prompted the first movements of the Crusaders, began to throw anxious looks toward the wings, now wandering far and wide. 'Where is the Bishop of Toulouse?' cried Lewis.—'Within the walls of Tarascon by this time,' said Sir Aymer, who still rode near him, 'if steed and steel hold out.'—'Prophet of evil!' cried the Dauphin, darting a furious glance at him;

—'but we shall soon have better tidings: hither rides a knight from the bishop's host.'—'My lord the Dauphin!' cried the panting messenger, 'the Bishop of Toulouse commends him to you: the holy and valiant prelate hath won the city of Tarascon, and prays you but to send a hundred men at-arms to aid him to maintain his post.'—'Meet state we are in,' said Lewis chafing, 'to lend him aid! Look thou how the tusks of those boars, De Foix and De Comminges, have gored our van! Let the bishop recall his forces on the instant, nor dream of his vaunted victory while the life of his liege lord is in peril!'—'I will do your message,' said the knight, who fell dead of his wounds as he turned his reins to ride. 'Nought but blood and death around us!' cried Lewis: 'where is Simon de Montfort?'—'Far on his way to gain the pass between the castle of Tarascon and the city,' said Sir Aymer, 'lest the former should yield support to the heretics.'—'*Par le sang des Rois*,' cried Lewis, gnashing his teeth with fury, 'madness seems to have taken possession of all the host! In the name of all the fiends, how chances it that De Montfort is intercepting aid from a castle, which is held for the Crusaders by the trusty Lambert de Limons?'—'Perchance it may be necessary to secure it for thine escape, Prince Dauphin,' continued Sir Aymer, ''specially if the close of this day resemble its beginning?'—'Raven, cease thy croaking!' cried the Dauphin fiercely. 'Valiant knights,' he added, 'there will be but short trial of your patience. I see aid advancing from yon hill, the forces of Vaugelas and De Limosin. Ride up yon hill, valiant knights, we shall thence command a better view, and be safe for a while from these fierce assailants! Lord Abbot of Normoutier, (for the abbot had once more been induced to ride at the head of his church vassals with the Crusaders,) ride up! See you not a descending band sweeping like a mist down yon hills?

And see—and see, a messenger rides fast; he comes with good tidings!'—'Holy St. Benedict,' cried the abbot of Normoutier, 'did ever messenger of good tidings ride so ill-bested? He is stuck through with arrows, and can scarce sit his horse.'—'Think you so, my lords?' said the Dauphin to his panting train, who, most of them wounded, had with difficulty gained the summit of the hill. There was no time for conjecture: the messenger, who was a scout of their own, sent out to reconnoitre the advancing aid, returned stuck with arrows, a score of archers in full pursuit of him, (or, in the language of the chase, growing to his haunches,) but dispersing as his fleet but wounded steed bore him beyond their reach, while the loyal vassal, though mortally wounded, shouted '*Sauve qui peut!* Raymond of Toulouse is in the field, crying "No quarter;" and the incarnate devil, clad like a knight in sable armour, fights by his side. All mortal aid is vain. Betake you to shrift, noble knights: for me, my task is done. It is a bloody day; it will be a bloodier night!' He fell from his horse as he spoke. He died; and none marked his end.

The terrible intelligence of Count Raymond being in the field, the fearful report (credible enough in those days) of the evil spirit himself being his auxiliary, and the certainty of their being thus enclosed between two hosts,—the troops of De Foix and De Comminges, and those of Count Raymond,—sent a terror to every heart, 'Save, save the Dauphin!' was the universal cry. Lewis was not wanting either in generosity or in valour. He dashed something like a tear from his eye, and then held a brief council with the few who were near him in this last exigency.

'Sir Aymer, what think'st thou?' he said.—'That the oriflamme of France was never in such danger since it was blessed by the holy Abbot Luger, on the deliverance of thine ancestor Lewis VI.' answer-

ed the blunt but faithful knight.—'Gaston de Mortigny,' said the Dauphin to his standard-bearer, 'what is thy counsel?'—'The same that I gave your highness' father at the battle of Bovines,' said the firm knight; 'I told King Philip, that, while the oak stood, the branch should never be rent from its trunk, and, if your grace so please, the branch shall cleave to the royal sapling this day, as it did to the ancient trunk, let the storm blow as it lists.'—'Then *let* the storm blow as it lists!' cried Prince Lewis, tossing his arms with agitated action like the oak in a tempest; and all the knights around him shouted, 'Let the storm blow as it list!' and clashing their lances against their shields, drowned their redoubled shouts in the martial sound.

A dreadful scene was going on in another part of the field. The Bishop of Toulouse found the post in the city of Tarascon, that his desperate valour had won, untenable. The messengers he had despatched for aid had either perished, or returned with disastrous tidings of the Dauphin being hotly beset in the centre, and demanding succour instead of being able to yield it. The bishop kept his steady and far-seeing eye fixed on the oriflamme. 'Gaston de Mortigny holds the standard still,' he said internally; 'the Dauphin is but panic-struck.' Meanwhile, he saw and recognized the banners of Count Raymond on the hills; while De Comminges, at that moment, had detached his powers to assail him as he burst from the walls of Tarascon, that he could no longer keep, to hew his way back to the distracted and harassed centre of the host. He paused a moment: the approach of Raymond of Toulouse was inevitable—the assault of De Comminges was not less so: and the bishop, wiping his 'mailed brow with his bloody hand,' computed calmly that a thousand lives must be lost, ere he could win the centre of the host. With his voice of thunder he shouted to his followers, whom he was about to sacri-

fice; with his battle-axe, wielded with resistless might; he began to deal death among all that encountered him. His strokes fell like a woodman's—not on oaks that he cleaved, but on twigs that he shred; and the whole forest of the field went crushing down before him. He struck De Comminges below his horse's hoofs; he mowed down his train like rushes before a peasant's staff; he trampled on the dying bodies of his own men at arms. Yet, still there appeared 'a great gulf fixed' between him and the centre of the host, where, though safety was doubtful, it could alone be won. De Foix, Sir Amirald, and their powers, rallying after their third sally to respire; and to despatch aid to the fainting and defeated wing led by De Comminges, pushed their gored and panting steeds up a small eminence to reconnoitre. Here they paused for a moment; and Amirald's kindling eye rested with involuntary admiration on the progress of the Bishop of Toulouse, while he

> 'Mowed across and made irregular harvest,
> Defaced the pomp of battle,'*

trampling an hundred lives beneath him, and menacing a thousand more by the resistless might that had laid those hundreds low.

D. Foix, after surveying the field for a moment, exclaimed, 'If Raymond of Toulouse *be* in the field—if Raymon *be* in the field—his war-word will be *Point de quartier!* Get thee a fresh steed, Sir Amirald, and charge once more. They are marching like the wind towards the Castle of Tarascon: that betokens disaster and defeat. Throw thyself between them and the Castle of Tarascon, and leave the day to me.'

Sir Amirald cast one reluctant look of brave regret on the routed and prostrate wing of De Comminges, and hastened to obey the order of De Foix.

* Dryden's Don Sebastian.

All the loyal chivalry of France had gathered round the Dauphin. He sat on his steed for some moments, agitated less by his danger than by that enthusiasm of devoted hearts that his own was too full to answer. He paused—fluctuated—turned his eyes towards the Castle of Tarascon—cast them again on the brave band that rallied round him. His foot was half in the stirrup to fly—his hand on his sword to fight—when the Bishop of Toulouse, dyed in blood (but not his own) from heel to helm, spurred the third steed he had bestrided that day by the Dauphin's side. 'My lord the Dauphin,' he cried, 'why this delay? Save your royal life, and let those of your subjects pay their prince's ransom!' The Prince hesitated. The counsel of those who surrounded him was all various and contradictory. 'Seek the ramparts of the Castle of Tarascon! cried some—'Seek no rampart but that of the bodies of thy foes, that these loyal lances shall soon rear around thee!' cried others.—'Cease your vain tumult, knights!' shouted the commanding voice of the bishop. 'Raymond of Toulouse is in the field!' —'And men say the incarnate fiend fights beneath his banner!' cried the sole survivor of the bishop's train.—'An' it be so,' cried the Abbot of Normoutier, 'it is time for me to quit the field: I marched against mortal men; but I am no match for the devil.' —'Coward priest! desertest thou thus?' cried Prince Lewis, as the abbot, with his numerous train, turned his reins; his crosierbearer riding fast in the van.—'Recreant and disloyal churchman! dost thou fly—and at such a moment?' shouted the Bishop of Toulouse, as the advancing banners of Count Raymond waved over the diminished and distracted host of the Crusaders, like the wings of ravens over anticipated corses.—'*Do pignora certa timendo*,' quoth the abbot, clapping spurs to his steed; while all the church vassals followed fast, the crosier glittering in the van,—'False priest!' cried the Bishop

of Toulouse, 'would there were a bow in mine hand and the arrow should nail thee to the earth as thou ridest. Prince Dauphin, take counsel for thy life; escape to the Castle of Tarascon. The arrows of Count Raymond's host are already galling the flanks of thine. Some strange misadventure hath befallen us to-day. Win but the Castle of Tarascon, and to-morrow——' 'On to the castle! my best lord,' shouted a thousand voices:—and Prince Lewis set on, well trusting that Simon de Montfort had secured his safe reception there.—'Take my reins,' said the desponding prince to Gaston de Mortigny as he rode; 'I am no longer fit to guide even mine own steed.'—'My prince,' said the firm standard-bearer,' mine hand was never wont to sustain other burthen than that of the oriflamme; and it shall be severed from my body ere it quit its grasp.'

Voices on voices now shouted, 'Haste! my liege, haste!—the foe perceives our disarray,'—'Raymond of Toulouse presses on our rear!' cried others, thronging fast with their disastrous tidings.'

Lewis stood stupified with shame and despair. Starting at length from his trance, 'Take thou this shield,' he cried, flinging it to a page; 'and take thou this,' to another, tearing off his surcoat, emblazoned with the royal lilies and the cross of the Crusaders; 'a fugitive should no longer bear the insignia of a leader!'

De Foix marked their disarray. 'Ride up!—ride up! Sir Amirald,' he cried; 'take two— take two hundred—take three—take all my choicest men, and throw thyself between the Crusaders and the Castle of Tarascon. My devoir, as brother-in-arms, binds me to rescue De Comminges.' They parted each on his desperate enterprise; and that instantaneous parting was like the eruption of distinct flashes of lightning from an overcharged cloud.

As Sir Amirald rode, his eye involuntarily glanced (in spite of the deathful impetuosity of his speed,)

on the scenery that surrounded the defile through which he pressed. The banners of Count Raymond surmounted the distant hills; his van rushed glittering from their summits, and amid their windings, the track of the gemmed and gilded crosier, glancing and disappearing as the riders wound up the eminences and descended the declivities, marked the flight of the Abbot of Normoutier. But all power of observation was lost, when he hasted to fling himself between the power of the Crusaders and the Castle of Tarascon; for at his first approach, the castle, which till that moment had stood like a dark, unexploding volcano, from bartizan and battlement, from every loop and shot-hole, rained down such a shower from bow and arbalist, that half the boldest that Sir Amirald led lay corses beneath the first discharge, and the second rank who succeeded formed as they fell only a rampart for those who followed to scale, and meet the same fate ere they had climbed the dreadful and slippery ascent of mangled bodies and streaming blood.

Lambert de Limons, an expert tactician, had reserved all his artillery for the crisis which he foresaw, and its effect was complete. It was in vain that Sir Amirald tried to rally his powers; exclusive of the shot from the loop-holes, that fell like the gigantic hail on the foes of Joshua, fifty cross-bow-men stationed on the bartizan, (like riflemen in modern tactics,) of whom every one could shoot 'five hundred feet him fro,' were ranged there, taking down at their leisure man and life. Sir Amirald felt his post untenable: he was about to wind his bugle to recall the few survivors, when an unusual movement among the Crusaders made him pause.

The Dauphin and the Bishop of Toulouse, with their trains, in taking their determination to seek shelter in the Castle of Tarascon, had reckoned on their safe arrival there, as the wing of their army led by Simon de Montfort was almost under its tow-

ers; but ere their flight (for such it was) could bear them to the spot, Sir Amirald was there, and Simon de Montfort was already mortally wounded.

All now was tumult and consternation: De Montfort, whose fierce spirit predominated even in death, called for a fresh steed, but vainly attempted to mount him. Mental terrors, hitherto unknown, seemed working together with his bodily suffering. From the moment that he had heard the wild report of an evil spirit in the guise of a sable knight riding in aid of Count Raymond, he had exclaimed that it was the spirit of the Count de Beziers, (of whose murder he was more than suspected,) and exclaimed that whenever he attempted to raise his battle-axe, a hand in black armour lay on his arm, and weighed down by its pressure soul and brand. But at the voice of Prince Lewis he seemed madly excited once more, and grasping the arm of his squire, 'Thou seest,' he said, 'this gash on my forehead so overflows mine eyes with blood that I can no longer see to guide my reins: place me, I charge thee, faithful Raoul, right before the Dauphin; and on my feet, while they can support me, I will do a warrior's deeds, or die a warrior's death.' —'Stay not to listen to this madman, my liege,' cried the Bishop of Toulouse; 'make for the castle ere all be lost.' The bishop's action gave full warrant for his words; he spurred right onward towards the barrier that Sir Amirald's band presented betwixt him and the castle: 'the iron sleet of arrowy shower,' that had rained from the Castle of Tarascon intermitted on the bishop's approach; the garrison, by the direction of Lambert de Limons, sparing their foes, lest they should destroy their friends. Amirald seized the moment to extend his line between the lowered drawbridge and the approach of the bishop's power.

The bishop paused on his desperate position: the protended lances of Amirald's band were before

him. Suddenly forsaking his stirrups, with a hand of iron he twice and thrice plunged his dagger into the quivering flanks of his steed; and the noble animal, agonizing under the blows, with one spring cleared the lances of the band, and fell on his haunches amid its centre. Another stab of the dagger raised him in a moment: the bishop forsook the reins, and wielded his battle-axe. He had plunged like a rock falling into the ocean, but the dispersed waves soon recoiled. Many lay crushed beneath the weight of the impulse: others rose; and others, who could not rise, grasped with their maimed and dying hands at the bishop's reins, which lay loose on the neck of his steed. Those hands were severed by the blows of his battle-axe, wielded right and left with a velocity and force as resistless as they are indescribable; and the last spring of his martyred steed lodged the bishop on the drawbridge of the Castle of Tarascon. 'Follow him—follow the valiant prelate, my liege!' cried the Crusaders. Prince Lewis spurred his steed.

At that moment, a sortie from the Castle pouring over the lowered drawbridge, forced Sir Amirald on, spite of himself, till in the tide of battle his hand was on the Dauphin's rein. 'Base renegade!' cried a voice, 'lay'st thou hand on thy prince's rein?' 'What am I now?' said Lewis, as, stupified, he appeared to ask of Amirald whether he were prisoner.—'What art thou? The Dauphin of France still,' answered the voice.—'Leave me to deal with this Sir Knight Sans-barbe.' And his blow, wielded with no light hand, made Sir Amirald yield hold of the Dauphin's rein, and turn in his own defence. His antagonist, by many evolutions performed with more skill than force, but which proved him master of the strategy of the age, succeeded in drawing Sir Amirald to some distance from the spot. Amirald, incensed at being thus deluded, and baffled by one whose hoary beard was visible through the bars of

his helmet, now struck with such good aim and hearty hand, that the old knight almost breathless exclaimed, 'Hold, sir boy! By heaven, thou smitest like Guillaume *le Charpentier*,* in the old Crusades. No marvel thou art silent: thou lackest all thy breath for such blows.' Amirald answered him in the words of an old chivalric song—

Un Chevalier, n'en doutez pas,
Doit ferir hault, et parler bas.

—'Say'st thou me so?' said the old knight, whose associations appeared to be awakened, but in no friendly manner, by the sound of his voice. 'Then have at thee!' and he dealt a blow at the casque of Amirald (the rivets of which were loosened in the struggle of the day) with such good-will and steady aim, that it rolled on the ground; and his head was exposed to the next blow of his adversary. It descended, but was paralyzed in its descent as Sir Aymer discovered the features of his former protegé, Amirald. Its force was, however, such as to lay the young knight prostrate before him. 'Strike,' said Amirald; 'but, as thou art a knight, protect a young female in yon beleaguered and distressed town, whom thou hast, I believe, bereft of all other protector.' Sir Aymer was at the moment beside Amirald, and supporting him on his knee as he lay. 'Protect *her!*' he cried, almost in tears,—'*her* who hath been thy ruin? Now, out on her, hilding and harlot! Could she not be content with going to the devil her own heretic way, but she must needs have thee to bear her company? Look up, my boy, and live; and a fair course of chivalry and love is yet bright before thee.'—'Oh!' said the youth, faintly raising himself on his arm, while a sickening ago-

* So called, because his strokes in battle were said to be as heavy as those of a *carpenter*. See Mill's History of the Crusades. One would have thought *le forgeron* would have been 'more germane to the matter.'

ny overcame his whole frame,—'Oh that, instead of defaming the most pure and heavenly being of God's creation, thou wouldst adopt her better creed!'

'Teach me—tell me it!' cried Sir Aymer in the overflowings of his kindly heart, as he bent over his dying favourite. 'But, no, boy; thou mayest spare the labour!' he said half-sighingly, half-lightly. 'I could resign unintelligible dogmas and inexplicable mysteries; but I never, never can resign that devotion that worships female saints;—no, never for thee, dear boy, (and thou wast very dear to me,) can I give up that dear devotion. Pshaw! change the visage of a Madonna for that of one of thy cowled barbes!'

At this moment a shout from the Crusaders announced that the Dauphin had reached the castle in safety; and the loyal hearted knights now took the calm counsel of despair together, like the sailors who despatched a boat from their sinking ship to land James the Second on the coast of Scotland, and, as he reached it in safety, gave him three cheers from the deck of their own devoted vessel.

There was but too much cause for their despair. De Foix, who had collected the routed wing of De Comminges, flung his whole force between the Crusaders and the Castle of Tarascon. The Bishop of Toulouse, by desperate valour, aided by the superhuman strength of his gigantic frame, had passed the barrier: so had Prince Lewis, by the aid of his loyal knights. But as Simon de Montfort, blinded with his own blood, and maddened with the agony of his wounds, was led towards the bridge, a *quarrel*, from a cross-bow aimed at De Foix, who stood nearer the tower, struck on his head, mingling the fragments of his helmet with his brains and blood,—and the Champion of the Church was no more!*

* The Count de Montfort perished thus, not under the castle of Tarascon, but the walls of Toulouse.—*Vide* Perrin.

The body was hurried into the castle by the attendants.

The gap thus made in the battle of the Crusaders was closed in a moment; but the loss of Simon de Montfort was recalled and remembered for centuries afterwards.

There was not a moment now to lament his loss. The powers of Raymond of Toulouse came on apace, the sable knight raging like a whirlwind in its van: De Foix and his band, blazing like a moat of fire between the Crusaders and the castle, few passed it with life, and fewer still who did so survived long. The strife beneath the walls resembled more the struggle of demons in their native element of fire, than the strife of mortal men. Steed and stirrup, lance and sword, were forsaken:—it was breast to breast—limb to limb—dagger to dagger—heart to heart,—canopied by arrow-flight—darkened by the discharge of war wolf and catapult.

Amid this scene of demoniac horror and madness, it was admirable to see how the strong feeling of religion alone armed its humblest professor in panoply.

The Monk of Montcalm, who had followed humbly in the rear of the splendid array of the Abbot of Normoutier, had, on the first intelligence of his defection, thrown himself into the Castle of Tarascon; and now he stood, amid the flight of five hundred arrows, to do his holy duty by those who fought and those who fell. Warned of his danger, but slighting it, he stationed himself on the bartizan of the great gate that commanded the drawbridge. From that spot he gave the general benediction to the hundreds that were perishing; and then, exalting his voice and straining his sight, attempted to give absolution to the individuals whom he saw claiming it: and, amid the horror and tumult of that mortal fight, many a dying Crusader turned his swimming eye, and tried to clasp his blood-steeped

hands, and to raise his maimed and shattered limbs, to meet the last blessing, or even to catch the last sight, of the holy Monk of Montcalm!

At the first shout, announcing the escape of the Dauphin, Sir Aymer, who had led his antagonist from the spot merely to secure his Prince's safety, began, now that that was provided for, to think of his own. 'Farewell!' he cried: 'and yet it pities my very heart to leave thee thus; though I may be in worse plight myself, an' I tarry longer. I must needs leave the devil and the heretic together to settle accounts: I will defer the closing of mine with him while I can:'—and he galloped off. Yet, with a touch of his natural kindliness of heart, returning for a moment, he told Amirald, that if he could reach the city of Tarascon, he might shelter there in safety; as the report of the plagues raging there was a mere *ruse*, invented by Lambert de Limons, and executed by the malignity of the dying wretch, who was in fact its only victim.

As he disappeared, the eyes of Amirald, swimming in mortal sickness, were lifted towards the hills on which the giant form of the sable night rode, careering like the master and compeller of the stormy clouds that were gathering fast on their summits. His train came far behind, for not one dared to ascend or descend the precipices abreast of him, nor even on the plain could they match for a moment the supernatural fleetness of his course. Amirald's senses failed him as he gazed on this portentous figure and its movements; and saw the hills dimly mixed in his swimming vision with the form that swept along them. When he recovered from his trance, he found himself in a glen, small, narrow, and solitary, apart from the battle, but not from its roar, whose thunders from time to time startled its lonely echoes. His first sensation was amazement at finding himself in a place of comparative safety: he raised himself slowly on his el-

bow, like one who, awaking from slumber, sees himself conveyed into an unknown chamber, and wonders how he was brought there. There was no one to tell him that the sable knight had commanded some of his train, who were about to nail him to the earth where he lay, to raise and convey him to the nearest place of possible safety. There was, indeed, no one to tell this, or aught else; for Amirald soon perceived that the glen was choked with dead bodies up to the bases of the rocks that enclosed it. They were the bodies of some of De Foix's band; and this pass seemed to have been disputed with mortal hostility: every man had fallen where he fought, and every man lay on his back as he fell.

As Amirald looked round on this death-place of unburied corses, the agonizing thirst excited by his wounds was aggravated by the sound of 'gurgling waters near;' and the lonely, gentle sound was a kind of rebuke uttered by Nature to the outrages exercised by man in her holiest quietudes.

Amirald tried to raise and drag himself in the direction of the sound. As he crawled over the dead bodies—for he could not move without touching or treading on one—a groan issued beneath his feet: he started—it came from one that yet lived. Amirald, stooping, tried to recognize form or lineament in the breather; but he was so mangled and crushed by his wounds and fall, that his mother, searching the field, would not have known her own child.

Forgetting the thirst that parched him, Amirald toiled to raise the sufferer, and at length dragged from beneath the weight of incumbent bodies the giant-form of Boanerges. Amirald's short warfare under the banners of De Foix had made him acquainted with the name and person of the warlike pastor, and with increasing effort he succeeded at last in placing him with his back against a rock. He was dying. Amirald made his way to the

spring—tasted it—brought back some drops in his cloven shield, and bathed the brow and lip of the dying man. They refreshed him. 'Raise me up,' cried Boanerges, 'if thou hast any christian mercy.'—'I will,' said the youth, 'if my failing strength can sustain thee; but I fear thy state is past all hope.'—'It is not that,' said Boanerges—'it is not that; but did I not hear, as I fell—or was it a dream in my deadly trance? hath the oppressor ceased? is Simon de Montfort dead.'—'Simon de Montfort hath perished,' said Amirald, 'and the Crusaders are defeated. The powers of De Foix and de Comminges, aided by Raymond of Toulouse, hold the field.'—'Raise me higher, higher, good youth,' cried the stern Albigeois, 'that I may see the slaughter—the slaughter of the enemies of the Lord, while my dying eyes yet can behold it.'—'In the name of God,' cried Amirald, suddering at this posthumous vindictiveness, 'turn your mind to better thoughts. I am not so well versed in thy creed as thou must be; but does it suggest no other comfort at thy dying hour?'

'The everlasting hills take part against them,' cried Boanerges: 'they reel round and charge; and their leaders are the storms and the clouds that have so often been the shelter of the Albigeois; they are weaving winding-sheets for them on the hill-tops. The spirits of those who perished there are coming to greet them, mother and babe; but'—extending his mangled arms towards the Castle of Tarascon—'Simon de Montfort hath perished, and envies his victims already.'

'Alas! alas!' cried Amirald, 'think not of such things now—speak not so fearfully;' and, in involuntary forgetfulness of his new creed, he held up his cross handled sword to fix the eyes of the dying man on the symbol of redemption. A rigid pallor had overspread the face of Boanerges; but at the sight of the cross his eyes kindled with a ghastly

light, and lifting his maimed hand, 'Take away the abomination!' he cried: then in a fainter voice, 'Nay, let me see it once more; the blade is red with Crusaders' blood.' He gazed, smiled, and expired.

Amirald now felt as if alone on earth: the last survivor near him lay a corse at his feet. He turned his heavy eyes towards the Castle of Tarascon, where the work of death was still going on; for the powers of Count Raymond were now almost beneath its walls, mowing down by hundreds the remains of the Crusaders, who, dispirited by the fate of De Montfort, and the flight of the Dauphin and the Bishop of Toulouse, seemed to submit to their fate with the passiveness of sheep penned in a fold to the unresisted ravages of a band of wolves. As band after band of Raymond's army swept along the hills, Amirald raised his voice, and waved his bloody scarf, to call for aid; as he felt that a knight of De Foix's army would meet prompt assistance from the allied band of the Count of Toulouse.

The thunder of their speed drowned his feeble appeal: his weakness increased; and he was sinking down half in stupor, half in despair, to die, when the tones of a heart-remembered voice, uttered in the most piercing distress, roused him in a moment to life and energy. Other bands besides those of Raymond were traversing the field: among them were some of the troops of the Bishop of Toulouse, whom he had led within the very walls of the city in his first wild and unsupported assault, and had left behind him to fight back their desperate way, or to perish. A few had succeeded in the former attempt; but previously they had encumbered themselves with some rich plunder in the town, and some females distinguished for beauty—and aware of a circuitous direction by which they might reach the postern of the castle, they had skirmished on the skirts of the battle, and now, by the shelter of twi-

light, dispersing in small bands and various directions, were speeding onwards with their respective plunder.

Amid a share rudely divided and fiercely contested was Genevieve, whose beauty made her too precious a prize to be lightly resigned. As a few, who had parted from the rest, were hurrying with their victim through the solitary glen, (as their least dangerous path,) the sight of Amirald's crest and broken plume caught her eye, and her shriek of 'Save me! for the love of Heaven, save me!' thrilled in his ringing ears. To start to his feet, to wave his broken brand, to rush among the ruffians, and be felled to the earth by their blows, was but the action of a moment. Of all that followed he was unconscious: but his splendid armour marking him as no vulgar prisoner, his body, still senseless, was borne into the Castle of Tarascon, when nightfall rendered the approach to the postern safe; and along with it was borne that of Genevieve—not senseless, indeed, but silent in despair.

CHAPTER XV.

Come in, and let us banquet royally
After this golden day of victory.
SHAKSPEARE'S *Henry the Sixth.*

COUNT Raymond of Toulouse feasted that night in his tent, with all his warriors, in the pride of victory. Their spirits were elated, and with reason. This was no triumph by ambuscade over the Crusaders, like the first they had obtained;—no desultory skirmish, like that in which the Bishop of Toulouse's troops had been cut off by the Count, when he attempted to intercept the progress of the Albigeois towards Arragon:—they had met the Crusaders in their might, face to face, and in pitched battle had defied and defeated them. Meanwhile goblets were filled and drained to the pledge of '*Vive Toulouse!*' and already, in the imagination of the revellers, the Count was established in his territorial city, and his subjects allowed the free exercise of their religion.

Count Raymond sat and listened; sometimes elated and sometimes depressed, as he heard the boasts of victory lately achieved. He remembered how often he had been thus hailed and greeted by lips that were now cold! He dwelt inwardly on a wearying recollection of war, woe, persecution, and

vicissitude for twenty years, with gleams of success between, like the brief light of a sun in a wintry sky, darkness fast following. As he thought thus, he raised the goblet to his lips and drained it; resolving to forget the past if he could, and to enjoy the present. The debate of the knights struck on his ear without exciting his attention, till one of them demanded, 'Wherefore did not that sable knight, who had such noble share in our toil to-day, meet us at the feast to-night?'—'Who hath seen him but in battle?' said another. 'He shuns all human converse and society.'—'He never assists at mass, nor utters his prayers apart, like an Albigeois,' added another speaker.

The mention of the sable knight's name was like 'the letting out of water:' report followed report, and whisper whisper. 'Though he shuns all converse,' it was said, 'he talks often with that ill-favoured page who ever follows him,—more like the imp of a wizard than the attendant of a noble knight.

'Who hath ever seen his visor unclosed,' asked an ancient knight, 'since he hath joined our host?'—'Who would wish to see it?' replied another: 'his casque to day sustained blows that would have felled earthly man.'—'And the arrows slew right and left,' said another, 'but pierced not him: they glanced on his mail like chaff flung against the wind.'—'And his steed, with five barbed arrows quivering in its flank, and its sides all gore, made a leap that no mortal steed ever made, bestrode by mortal rider,' added another.

'Count of Toulouse,' said the ancient knight, 'I would rather lose the fairest field that ever mortal arm struck in, were life the wage and a throne the prize, than win it by evil aid, such as I dread was marshalled on thy side to-day in the form of that unknown knight.'

'Noble sir,' said the Count, with his wonted

fluctuation, 'you think not so darkly of the stranger? —and yet, perchance——'

'Heed him not, noble Count Raymond!' said a youthful knight—'heed not those dreams! I saw nought achieved by this sable knight, as ye call him, beyond mortal prowess.' A murmur was heard among the knights. 'I say,' he continued, raising his voice, 'the fears of the cravens he dealt with first distorted him into a fiend and then they ran away from the fiend their fears had raised.'

'Fair lord,' said the ancient knight, 'may I be heard?'—'With all good favour,' said the Count. 'What is it you would demand, sir knight?'—'How this nameless knight chanced to lend you the aid of his arm, of which all must allow the might, though many may doubt by whom that might is given?'—'I will tell ye,' said Count Raymond, as if he felt relief like that which confession gives to a penitent, —'I will tell ye. Hearken, noble gentlemen and friends, all of you.'

He leaned with his arms on the table as he spoke, looking thoughtfully: the heads of all within hearing were closely inclined towards him, and many a cheek was pale at the expected tale, which the approach of danger and death that day had tinged only with a fiercer red.

'It was on the evening,' said Count Raymond, 'that the sufferings of my oppressed vassals, and the treachery and pride of Rome, had compelled me once more to take up arms in their defence, and trust their cause and mine once more to heaven;—on that evening I sat sadly in my chamber, having only two of my household 'squires near me, while I revolved in my own troubled and silent thought, how much and vainly I had consulted for the welfare of my subjects; seeking, I appeal to God, only their good, while I was ever, alas! unwillingly working them evil. I thought of the wars

I had been forced into; the peaces I had been compelled to make; the concessions to the Holy Father, that had been followed only by fresh encroachments; and the resistance, that had been punished by severer chastisement; and I sighed as I beheld my shield once more taken from the wall of my chamber. It waxed late, when a page entered, followed by him ye call the sable knight. He advanced in silence, with the bars of his helmet closed. I commanded to place a seat for him: he declined it; waving his hand, but still in silence. I do vouch, noble friends, though the knight met my greeting courteously, there was something chilling in his presence; such as perchance, yourselves may have felt at times.' A responsive shudder among the guests answered him. 'He spoke at length,' continued Raymond. "Lord Count," he said, "thou art about to do battle against thy foes; I offer thee the aid of my lance and sword; perchance thou wilt not find them powerless. But I demand of thee three conditions, on which my service shall be duly tendered;—that thou never demand my name, or ask why my shield bears no cognizance; that thou never require that the bars of my visor be unclosed; and lastly, that if this arm achieve thee victory, thou wilt grant whatever boon I ask, save thine honour, life, and faith." I yielded and——' "This we have heard,' said the ancient knight. 'But, lord of Toulonse, thou hast another tale to tell of this stranger knight, or report wrongs thee and him foully?'—'It is true,' said Count Raymond; 'there is a tale—a passage—that did, in a manner, force on me the fear (the feeling I would say) that our dark associate is formed of other mould than mortal men.' 'Reserve the disclosure for a fitter occasion,' said a voice close beside Count Raymond's chair. Count Raymond sank back in his seat, but lifted his eye slowly in the direction whence the voice proceeded.

The sable knight stood there, unannounced, unattended even by the ill-favoured page, his constant companion. At the sound so suddenly heard, many of the knights started on their feet, and unsheathed their daggers; while others cowered where they sat, and hid their foreheads in their clasped hands for a time. The tent was lit only by one large lamp, suspended from the roof right over the centre of the table where the guests sat; and, during the earnest conversation between them and count Raymond, the pages had neglected to trim it, so that only a dim and waning light fell on the darkened groupe with their gleaming daggers, and the towering form and ebon-like mail of the sable knight.

"Sir sable knight," said Count Raymond, at length recovering himself, "your appearance amongst us hath been somewhat sudden, but is not the less welcome: I pray you, sit, and partake of our cheer." The figure in the sable armour shook its head in silence. "Sir sable knight, I pledge you in a cup of wine: you will not refuse my pledge?" A silent gesture of disinclination was again the only answer. "By my faith, sir knight, this is somewhat discourteous; but, if thou wilt neither partake of our feast, nor answer to our fair terms of courtesy, declare, after what manner likes thee best, thy purpose and thy pleasure here." The figure, by silent but emphatic gestures, signified its wish to speak with him alone. Count Raymond's cheek changed its hue at this invitation; and twenty voices, in eager whispers, murmured, "Go not with him, lord Count, at peril of thy life—or more!" The figure did not utter a sound, but continued to repeat its gestures with such an air of gentle invitation, and such a sorrowful inclination of the head withal, that Raymond, ashamed of his fears, rose from his seat, and, withdrawing the curtain of a recess in the pavilion, entered it, followed by the figure, leaving on the minds of his guests an impression of anxious and indefinable awe. For some time not a word was spoken; nothing could be heard but

the rustling of the mantles of the guests, as they laid down their untasted wine to gaze on the closed aperture, and then hushed the sound, to watch what might issue from it: but not a breath could be heard—all within the pavilion was as still as death. To their high-wrought anxiety the delay seemed protracted, and their very silence was becoming insupportable to themselves, when suddenly a deep and prolonged groan burst on their ears, and steps were heard passing from the pavilion. There was no restraining them now: they rushed into the recess, where they found only Count Raymond, who, after a hurried inquiry into the cause of their intrusion, and an assurance, in a broken voice, of his safety, returned with them into the pavilion, and took his seat at the board again.

But from that moment the taciturnity of his companion seeemed to have possessed him: his goblet stood beside him untouched, and the most earnest and searching inquiries, could not extort from him a syllable relative to his conference with the sable knight. "Press me no farther, lords," he said, at length, heavily, "with questions a solemn oath forbids me to answer. Meanwhile believe this, that, since I was a man, never was I so sore amazed, or in such deep heaviness of spirit: and now methinks it waxes late—a fair good rest to all. Our wearied and wounded host forbid us to invest the Castle of Tarascon on to-morrow; but on the following day we will march to the assault with all our forces, and shake off the gloom which this strange visitation hath inspired. But, ere we set forth," he added in a deeper tone, "we must purify the host, nor hope to prosper with stained hands, and hearts burthened with unatoned guilt. A dark and fearful deed hath been done; and *one* amongst us must expiate his crime, even the flesh: for the soul, may God absolve it." He retired, and every knight departed silent and thoughtful to his tent.

The sable knight had returned to his, where, as usual, he found his page, who never quitted it day or night, awaiting him. This unfortunate youth appeared to have been the victim of some deadly distemper: his figure was slender, though somewhat awkward; but his hands, and what could be seen of his face, had the livid and discoloured hue rather of a corse than of a living creature. A bandage was over more than half his face, to conceal the loss of an eye, which had been extinguished by the malignity of the disease; while the other gleamed with a brightness that seemed preternatural, when contrasted with the deadly colour of his features. His shoulders, too, were bent and distorted: and it was not possible to conceive a more ghastly and revolting form than that of the ill-favoured page, whose inseparability from his mysterious master was not, in the minds of those who remarked it, a circumstance likely to diminish the impression caused by his deformity, profound silence, and total abstraction from all human companionship.

As the sable knight entered the tent, the page prepared to touch his harp. "Forbear!" said the knight: "I am not in the vein. What star is that," he continued, looking upward, "that burns so bright in heaven right above the tent?"—"Sages call it Orion," answered the page.—"Are not the pure lights of heaven," said the knight, speaking to himself as was his wont—"are they not weary of looking on the crimes and sorrows of earth? When will they close their bright eyes, and leave men to do the deeds of darkness by the light that best befits them?" A pause followed, for the page never spoke till addressed by his lord. "From whom didst thou learn thy starry lore?" said the knight.—"An ancient monk taught it me, so please you."—"And was it a monk who taught thee to touch thy harp so masterly?"—"I had another teacher for that," replied the youth: "a skilful, but a wondrous harsh one—it was grief."—"I believe thee, in truth," said the knight,

" and never did the hand of pupil counterfeit that of master so well."—" Mournful as its touch is," said the youth, " it hath sometimes won me back from despair."—" And me from madness!" exclaimed the knight, with one of those stormy bursts of terrible emotion, which now no longer startled his unfortunate companion. " Try," he added, " try if the spell be lost!" The page obeyed, and accompanied his harp with a voice whose sweet but wild tones had in them nothing earthly—

Oh, sweet is the feeling, and sweet the hour,
When Fancy, the bounds of existence scorning,
Restores to past visions of joy their power,
And the twilight of love beams as bright as its morning!

When day sinks low on its pillar of fire,
The sky with amethyst glories is beaming;
And oft, when the light of the soul hath set,
The heart reflects its departed gleaming.

But, oh! how much of the mingled and sad
Revives with the dreams of the *past* in the soul!
How sweet and bitter from Memory's cup
Is the drop that was nectar in Joy's bright bowl!

" Cease thy strain—it is all too light," said the knight. The page sighed. " And yet my lord has loved the praise of beauty well."—" *Once*," said the knight, in a voice that sounded like a groan: " but, I know not how it is, thy song turns ever on the beauty of man—a dull theme—not on that of women, one more suited to thy sex."—" Nor wonder," said the page, with sudden animation. " From woman beauty is almost demanded; the homely are slighted and neglected. In man we seek but strength, perchance symmetry; but when to these is added beauty, we feel gratitude to nature as for an unsought favour: it is, in truth, gratuitous bounty, and we gaze on it with the same delight that we would on a mountain fertile in roses, or a palace encrusted with gems." —" This is strange speech for one of thy sex to hold," said the knight. The youth was silent.

"Cheer thee, my boy!" said the knight, as if answering his silence. "No woman, in the softness of her sex, could have been a more faithful attendant on a wayward lord than thou hast been on me."—"Oh, my dear master!" cried the page: and, grasping the knight's hand while he knelt, he pressed his livid lips to it, and bathed it with tears. "I have been a stern master to thee!" said the knight, melting.—"Oh, no; ever most gentle and most gracious!"—"I have but one task more for thee," said the knight, collecting his voice; "and then"——He paused; while the page rose, and folding his hands on his bosom, stood reverently before him. "As we passed the shrine of holy St. Martin, on the other side the Rhone," said the knight, in a hurried voice, "I neglected to pay my devotions there. I am a sinful man, and would employ the orisons of one more pure than myself. Go there, I charge thee, by the dawn, which is now breaking: four men-at-arms shall be thy guard, and thy path lies wide of the Crusaders' post. Offer up thy prayers, and tell thy beads there for thy unhappy master; but, at the peril of thy life, return not hither till the sun hath twice risen on yonder hill." The unfortunate page seemed to listen as to his death's doom. He fell on his knees, apparently in supplication; but at the stamp of the knight's foot he rose trembling, and, bursting into an agony of tears, retired.

The day was now fully broke, and the knight was slowly, and with head declined, pacing his tent, when a herald of Count Raymond appeared at the entrance. The knight raised his head. "Speak thy lord's message, and briefly!" he said.—"My lord," said the herald, bowing, low,—"My lord prays you, Sir sable knight, to pause yet another day on your dreadful purpose; and if then——" The knight waved him off with a gesture of fierce impatience. "Commend me to thy lord," he said; and his better nature struggling within him—"and thank him, good fellow: but tell him, that he look to have a scaffold

reared in the centre of his host to-day; for blood that is flowing now in living veins must stain it ere many hours be past."—"Am I to do no other message to my lord?" said the herald, with sad reluctance. The sable knight paused. "Tell him," said he at length, "that I pray him to send some holy man to receive my confession, and, if it be possible, to absolve my soul. Let none else, at the peril of their lives, approach this tent to-day!" The herald departed.

The sable knight's request was not found easy to be complied with: not an ecclesiastic in the host of Count Raymond would undertake the task. But, as the demand had been so earnestly and solemnly made, the Count despatched a herald with a trumpet to the Castle of Tarascon, praying them within of Christian grace to send some holy man to shrieve a penitent at point to die, and promising on his knightly word that he should have safe conduct to and from his camp.

It was late in the evening when the holy man arrived; it was the Monk of Montcalm. He was conducted immediately to the tent of the sable knight, which had been inaccessible to human foot but his all that day.

Some hours elapsed, and at their close the monk and his penitent were still together; the proud and lofty form of the knight kneeling at the feet of the pale monk, who, in the progress of his confession, (with all its increasing horrors,) sat with uplifted eyes and locked hands as he listened.

"She promised," continued the penitent, "that she would shew my pre-doomed victim on the very night that the sacrifice was to be made; and she asked me for my ring, and swore she would produce it on that night! She did: but it was my bridal night!—and the victim was to be my bride! And such were her credentials from heaven or hell, that I believed her. She recalled the very words of my birth-vow—that I was sworn to sacrifice the last survivor of mine enemy's race!—and that last survivor was she whose hand I had clasped at the altar that

morn! I remember rushing into the chamber that night more like a fiend than a bridegroom. There was but one way to absolve me of my oath, and yet to shun the impossible crime: I drew my dagger and——" (the monk caught his arm)—"plunged it into mine own bosom! She saw it. Deeming me mad, she sprang up and struggled with me for the bloody weapon. I tried to inflict another—a mortal wound; and in the struggle——" "Hold! hold!" cried the monk, gasping.—"It was not I!—not I," cried the penitent in a piercing tone of agony: "her own hand dealt the blow! But, when I saw the bosom, so long pictured in my visions, pierced—when I beheld the blood flow, and the body fall—I rushed from the chamber with the speed and the despair of a fallen spirit hurled from Heaven. My wounds bled fast; I heeded them not, but ran on till I fell exhausted. After that I remember nought. I was for some months, as they told me, and as I had fearful cause to believe, where the unhappy seek to be. The maniac sorceress, whatever she was, who had urged me to my horrible fate, watched over my returning health and reason; but it was for her own deadly purposes, as a witch watches her caldron till the waters seethe and the flames sparkle to her devilish will. She nursed me, too, in that unhallowed place, the ruined tower of Hugo, and gave me for mine attendant that *ill-favoured page* who hath furnished such matter of scoff and slander, but who was, in truth, a most gentle and feeling boy. I sent him hence but this morning that he might not see me perish."—"Go on," said the monk, in a tone of singular calmness.—"I have nought more to disclose," said the penitent, "but this: that, when restored to bodily, not to mental health, I demanded my horse and arms. They were ready for me, as if raised by magic power; for that mysterious being seems always to have wealth at her will, though not at her use. But when I declared my purpose of joining the Crusaders once more, and added the wish

that the first lance levelled by the foe might find my heart, or the first arrow my brain, she prostrated herself before me, and, with such inconceivable agonies of supplication, implored that I should not draw brand against Count Raymond of Toulouse; that, all-careless where I fought, coveting only death, and deeming that I might as soon find it from a Crusader's hand as another's, and reckless where, so it was found, I offered the aid of mine arm to Count Raymond, on condition——" "I know the rest," said the monk, "by true report."—"Then thou knowest that I have sought Death in battle—yea, wooed him—but he has not come to me. The arrows missed me as they flew; the swords struck against me as if they were rushes: I could not die—yet I will not live:—and I have demanded of Count Raymond, as a boon——" "That which he never shall grant!" said the monk, rising hastily, as some distant recollections rolled like a mist over his soul; while amid them he thought he could trace clear images of past events, for he had been acquainted with the Count of Toulouse in his youth; and the confession he had heard awakened the thought of a discovery all but miraculous. —"Holy father, mock not a desperate man!" said the penitent.—"Son," replied the monk, in a solemn voice, "by thy soul's safety—by thy hopes of Heaven and mercy—by the powers of the church, in whose name I pronounce thee absolved of all crime —I adjure thee to remain here in peace till my return, and banish despair from thy heart the while!"

He did not return: but in a short space Count Raymond, rushing into the tent, strained in his arms his first-born, "his beautiful, his brave;" and in mingled agonies of contrition and fondness demanded pardon of his child, while he heaped blessings on his head. The astonished youth replied not, but knelt in reverence to receive the blessings so tenderly yet so mysteriously bestowed.—"On me be thy curse, my son!" cried Raymond, when he recovered his voice: "mine be the guilt of that vow that [illegible] bound on thy

soul whilst yet a child! Amid the flames of my burning castle, amid the murder of thy mother and thy brothers, I found only thee and my youngest boy surviving; thou, my Paladour, wast then near five years old, thy brother but an infant; amid blood and flames, in my heart's despair, I made thee swear to avenge the slaughter of thy house, even on the last descendant of its enemy's race. Oh, may God absolve me for a sin so deadly. Then, taking thee, my eldest boy, in mine arms, while the faithful menial, who had saved thee both, followed with thine infant brother in hers, I sought shelter for the night where I might. Amid the dark hills that surround the castle of Courtenaye we were assailed by ruffians: I fought till I fell; though never had mine arm struck with such strength as it did for thee, its precious burthen. I recovered from the trance, into which I had sunk through loss of blood; but I recovered to find myself childless. The attendant had fled with my infant at the beginning of the fray, and thou hadst wandered, or been borne away: nor ever did thine unhappy father hear aught of either till this hour. One hope I cherished, till that hope, long deferred, became almost despair. I had, by a preparation taught me by a skilful monk, impressed on the shoulders of each of my sons the mark of an arrow in colours indelible, trusting that if ever"——Sir Paladour bared his shoulder, and displayed the mark, and, yielding to all the filial delight of recognition, he threw himself voluntarily into the arms of his father: then, hastily withdrawing himself, "My lord and father," he cried, "since it is mine honoured fate to call you so, haste, in the name of Heaven, and save a worthier and happier son than I. That Sir Amirald, my noble father, who was my brother in arms before I knew him, my brother in blood on our disastrous progress to the Castle of Courtenaye, chafed with his heavy armour, threw it off to bathe in a stream we were passing, and I saw his shoulder bear the same mark as mine."—"And where, where is he now?" cried Raymond,

trembling in the new-felt agonies of the paternal heart.

"He fought yesterday beneath the banners of De Foix," said Paladour; "and, late in the day, I saw him borne a prisoner into the Castle of Tarascon. Full surely will the Crusaders wreak their vengeance on him as a recreant to their cause, sparing neither for his valour nor his early youth."—"Away! to horse, to horse! Mine armour—let my banner fly!" shouted Raymond. "Gaston—Bernard—Guy—slaves! why loiter ye now? Thou, Gaston," as they hurried to the tent, "hast a sharp spur: ride, ride, good fellow, for life and death, to the walls of Tarascon, and summon De Foix and De Comminges, as they are gallant lords, as they are Christian men, to join us with all their forces beneath the towers of the Castle by dawn. Tell them they ride in rescue of the noblest knight that ever buckled on harness beneath their banners—my son, my son," he exclaimed, bitter tears of agony starting from his eyes. "And thou, fair son," he said, "quit thy fearful purpose, and strike with me in aid of thy brother: thou wilt not rend thy father's heart the very hour thou wast first folded to it."—"My lord and father," said the youth sadly and fixedly, "I must needs resign my purpose, since I may not dishonour by a felon doom the noble house I spring from; but seek thy happiness from Amirald, not from me. That my soul hath shaken off the burthen of guilt predoomed and preternatural, I bless heaven and the saints; but life, love, and hope, blasted for ever, would even my father wish me to live?"

"Hark!" cried Raymond, "what tumult is this?—who breaks in on us? Merciful Heaven, what figure is this—and wherefore?" As he spoke, a figure darted into the tent, and, with a shriek which mingled joy and agony, clung round Paladour. In the dishevelled dress of a page, mingled with the flowing hair, the panting bosom, and the thrilling voice of a woman, Raymond saw only an increase of mys-

tery and amazement; but Paladour beheld in the page, whose bandage was removed, and whose livid dye had been washed off, his bride, his victim—Isabelle of Courtenaye.

The shock seemed too much for both. After twice enfolding each other—after twice holding each other at short distance, that they might gaze, and drink in recognition at eyes that thirsted for the view—Paladour at length uttered "Thou livest:" and as Isabelle, exhausted by emotion, sank on her knees, he sank along with her.

The Monk of Montcalm, who had accompanied the *ill-favoured page* to the tent, had been apprized on the way of her story, as on the intelligence of the intended sacrifice of Paladour she had hastened back from her prescribed pilgrimage, entreated but a moment's interview with him, and pledged her life for the effect of her presence. This was communicated by the monk to Raymond; and the blessings of a father were breathed on the heads of both.

The trumpets of Count Raymond sounded to horse, while the lovers still knelt before him. "Oh, what means that fearful sound?" cried Isabelle, clinging to Paladour. "Art thou to be thus found and lost in a moment?"

"Fear not, my love," cried Paladour, "the might of many is in my arm, the spirit of an armed host within my breast, since I beheld thee. I go no more a desperate reckless man to battle: I clasp a bride, and go to save a brother."

"Go then, my lover, my hero, my husband," said Isabelle, the pride of her lordly line flushing a cheek long pale: "let not the trumpet call thee twice!"—"Were it the trump of doom," cried Paladour, while he hastened to clasp his helmet and gorget the while, "I should not obey the summons, till I have heard how I am thus blest as by miracle."—"It will be a tale for our after-life," said Isabelle, "to tell thee how I was borne insensible from the castle by that evil woman, in the sad distraction of the hour when

my unhappy kinsman perished. She had many in the castle to work her will, and there was none to oppose her. Thee, too, whom she found breathless and bleeding in her way, she caused to be borne to that dreary tower thou rememberest. I have often thought there was goodness in that fearful woman to tend us as she did; but for some dark purpose of her own, it was suspended or overruled. I recovered; but only to see thy noble mind a wreck, my Paladour; and, with bitterer anguish still, to feel that my presence but thickened the cloud that overshadowed thy soul. That fearful being is skilful, as well as wicked, beyond her species. She taught me to stain my visage, and disguise and disfigure my form, that I might still be near thee without danger to thy tottering reason; she counselled me to follow thee in the guise of the hideous and disfeatured being I appeared; and sometimes my harp, and sometimes my voice, had that power for which I bore my degraded state with joy, and wept in ecstasy when I was alone."

"But why not sooner recognize me, my beloved, my bride?"

"Alas! my love, the sound of woman's name, or woman's love, overshadowed thy soul with deeper darkness. For years would I have watched, and wept, and prayed in my disguise: but now thou knowest me, my Paladour?" she cried, fixing her bright and swimming eyes on him as she spoke.

"Know thee!" cried Paladour, clasping her to his bosom, "know thee! Were I to live for ages, never could I know the truth of woman's faith, the strength of woman's constancy, the power and the purity of woman's love!"

A herald, as he spoke, appeared at the entrance of the tent. "I go," cried Paladour, rushing forth, while Isabelle, who had no other favour now to offer, cut off a lock of her long-neglected hair, and waved it towards him as he flung himself on his war-steed. "*Set on*, my noble father!" cried Paladour, riding

by the side of the Count.—" Hold, fair son!" said Raymond; " methinks a messenger rides towards us. Come ye," he said, as the messenger spurred his wearied steed onward, " come ye from the city of Tarascon, from our noble brothers-in-arms De Foix and De Comminges? or come ye from the Castle, where the Crusaders have betaken them?"

" I come, my lord, from the city of Tarascon, whence the forces of De Foix and De Comminges are pouring forth fast in aid of the assault. But, noble lord, as I passed the Castle of Tarascon, there were strange tidings abroad. The Crusaders are said to be dying by hundreds within the walls: the gates are thrown open; and all who can yet escape are flying from it for life!"

" On! my noble friends—set on! Fellow, I will reward thee well; but, hark thee, hast thou no other tidings?"

" None, my noble lord; save that, as I rode past the Castle, I saw an iron pillar reared on its loftiest turret, and piles of faggots heaped around it: for, live or die, the Crusaders have sworn to burn their prisoners to ashes ere the sun reach noon."

Count Raymond dashed his spurs into his steed's flank. " Away! away!" he cried, " tarry not for De Foix's loitering troops!—tarry not for mortal aid! *He* burns—the pile is blazing while I speak! Gentlemen, noble knights, *fathers*, set on!—on, in the name of God!" The army was all in motion as he spoke. " Where is my son Paladour!" cried the agitated parent.—" By thy side, my lord and father." —" Back, back, I charge thee, lest I lose ye both. Thou wilt not! Well, then, win thy brother's life, boy, if thou canst; but in the strife, spare, spare thine own as *mine!*"

CHAPTER XVI.

My senses blaze: my last, I know is come,
My last of hours. 'Tis wondrous horrid!—Now
My lawless love and boundless power reproach me!
LEE'S *Mithridates.*

THE Castle of Tarascon was that day indeed a scene of horror. The Crusaders, on their defeat, had thrown themselves within its walls in distraction, less at the danger that threatened them from the investing armies, than at the disgrace of their overthrow: Prince Lewis, in sullen despair, had shut himself up in his chamber, and menaced death to any intruder. The Bishop of Toulouse alone preserved his resolution. He appointed the following morning for performing the obsequies of the Count de Monfort; and, to heighten the solemnity, resolved to celebrate high mass in the chapel of the Castle, inviting the Crusaders to partake of the holy rite. This arranged, the bishop, summoning Lambert de Limons, toiled all day like a common man, in inspecting and strengthening the fortifications of the Castle; and towards evening retired to write letters, and dispatch couriers in every direction, to summon instant aid.

While he was thus employed, Lambert de Limons loudly murmured against the number of prisoners that were within the walls, and demanded, if the attack on the castle were turned into a siege, how so many useless mouths were to be fed?—"We will take order for that," said the bishop. "Go thou on the instant, and offer the prisoners their choice, either to renounce their heretical faith, or prepare to be dealt with as heretics, when mass is said to-morrow."—"My lord," said Lambert, reverently, "there be many of the Crusaders prisoners in the town; and

how if the Count de Foix should retaliate, and deal to them such measure as we deal to ours?"—"If it be so," said the bishop, with a sanctimonious air, "they are sure of heaven, perishing as martyrs in its cause. But, bold Lambert," he added with a smile, "thou art scarce as wise as brave, or thou wouldst know that the avarice of De Foix and his associate, are ample pledge for the safety of their prisoners. They will not lightly sacrifice lives, the least precious of which will be ransomed for a thousand marks of silver; while our sorry prey would be dearly redeemed at a liard for the whole community."—"But how, my lord, if they should accept the condition?"—"I trust their obstinacy for that," said the bishop. "Go, and do my bidding."

The Monk of Montcalm, who was present at this conference, stood aghast till, startled by the departure of De Limons, he attempted to remonstrate with the bishop. "It is not possible," he said—"it is not possible that you can harbour such horrible purpose! You speak but to terrify these wretched men."—"Thou wilt see that by to-morrow's dawn," replied the bishop, "an the smoke of the faggots do not dim thine eyes!"—"It is not possible!" repeated the monk. "The good God of mercy will not permit such cruelty to be wrought in his name. Also, this thing will be sin unto me, seeing I have pledged my faith as a Christian, to the prisoners for their safety." The bishop answered him in the words of the Abbot of St. Denis, when the king of England pretended a scruple of conscience in recognizing Pope Innocent, in preference to his rival Anaclet, "*Songez seulement comment vous repondrez à Dieu de vos autres péchés: pour celui-là, je m'en charge.*"—"Yet beware what thou doest, lord bishop!" said the monk, trembling with fear and resentment. "A noble knight, once a Crusader, is among thine intended victims, and——" "He shall perish first!" said the bishop, who burned to wreak his vengeance on Genevieve through her lover. "Not

all the lands that Raymond's victory yesterday hath won back for him, should buy that youth's life for an hour!" The monk redoubled his supplications. —"Thou hast prayed to marble saints, and they perchance have heard thee," said the bishop; "but now thou hast to deal with one of more impenetrable material than marble or adamant."—"And they must burn, youth and maiden, warrior and infant!" cried the monk. "Mercy, mercy! dread lord," he cried, falling at the bishop's feet, while tears streamed down his hoary beard—"mercy, in the name of the All-merciful!—on thyself, as well as on thy captives! Oh, how canst thou call for mercy who grantest none!"—"Debase not thyself in vain!" said the bishop. "Go shrieve the penitent who waits for thee in the camp of Count Raymond!" The monk arose from his knees, and waved his withered arm towards heaven. "I am guiltless of their blood!" he cried: "but for thee, thou man of cruelty—for so I dare call thee in thy pride—thou who rendest the flock thou shouldst feed, look if thou be not soon repaid as thou hast deserved!" He stood near a casement that looked on the walls of Tarascon, as he spoke. "Thou didst send that Sir Ambrose to treat for the ransom of the Crusaders; and, lo! I see a gibbet erected on the bartizan, and they are dragging towards it one who struggles."—"Are they about to hang him?" said the bishop, without raising his eyes from the letter he was writing.—"On the instant, unless a swift messenger be sent to stop their cruelty."—"The rope will have done its office ere a messenger could reach them," said the bishop, coolly.—"In the name of Heaven, then, let a mass be said for his soul!" cried the monk.—"That were needless too, for without all doubt he will die in his heretic faith," answered the bishop.—"Holy Heaven!" cried the poor monk, "can one hear of the fate of a dying wretch thus unmoved! Now they have dragged him to the gibbet! what strength despair can give! He hath burst from them—he grapples with them—now

they drag him forward on his knees—he clings to the gibbet's foot—they cannot untwine his grasp—the rope is wound round his neck."—"Good night, Sir Ambrose," said the bishop, without raising his head: "thou hast been somewhat troublesome and useless of late; and I sent thee of an errand where thy foul tongue and fierce temper have met their meed. Dotard, stand not there wringing thine hands! The herald of Count Raymond hath sounded his trumpet twice. Go, and assoil thy living patient: the dead are past thy cares."—"I go," said the Monk of Montcalm, "and Heaven grant that I may shed around his death-hour, that peace which, I fear me, bloody prelate, will be denied to thine!"—"Mauleon," said the bishop (without noticing his departure) to one of his military attendants, "thou sawest to-day, as I passed through the hall of the castle, where the prisoners were assembled ere they were conveyed to the dungeon—thou sawest I fixed mine eyes on a woman who stood amongst them?"—"I did, my lord, and understood the signal well."—"How now, thou insolent knave?—the woman I speak of was neither young nor fair; she was distinguished only by her grey hairs. Go, fetch her hither instantly!"

In a few moments she stood in his presence; and the bishop made a signal to his attendants to quit the chamber. While removing her mantle she gazed fixedly on him, disclosing the visage he expected to behold. "It is thou, then?" he cried; "but wherefore art thou here?"—"Wherefore is the vulture ever near the prey?" replied the female. "I was wandering near the skirts of the battle yesterday: they took me for an Albigeois,—and I am here."—"And here, then, thy life of mystery is doomed to close: the hand of Heaven hath overtaken thee at last!"—"Name not Heaven," said the female, "for what hast thou to do with it? It is mirth for the fiends when hypocrites talk of Heaven."—"Thou canst best tell tidings of thine own associates," said

the bishop: "they will, ere long, welcome the arrival of one who can teach even *them* new lessons of crime."—"Woe to those who first taught *me!*" answered the female.—"Out on thee, hag!" cried the prelate: "thy crimes were wrought in the mere wantonness of thy depravity! Was it not by thy devices, that the Lord of Courtenaye expired in flames, and the Lady Isabelle and her bridegroom perished?"—"Yet Paladour fought but yesterday beneath the banners of Count Raymond; and Isabelle, in menial habit, sleeps this night at the feet of her husband."—"What sayest thou?—but thou *canst not* speak truth!" cried the bishop. "Miserable woman! as thou hast hope of life, or of mercy, speak the truth!"—"Hope of life? bribe the fools who value it:—of mercy? who ever sought it at *thy* hands? But I *will* speak—not for thy will, but mine own. There were three on earth on whom I had vowed revenge: on two it hath been fulfilled, and on the third it *shall* be. Far above the wretched maniac as they stood in state and power, mine hand hath reached them. I knew the vow which was bound on Paladour's soul in childhood, and from childhood I watched him. I led him to the Castle of Courtenaye, when his age was ripe to fulfil it. I obtained admission there by working on the guilty terrors of the Lord of Courtenaye, and my admission facilitated my purpose."—"Hold, wretch! Was all that thou shewedst us in the vaults of the castle that night, mere illusion!—"Not *all*," replied his companion, with a withering smile. "Paladour beheld the bleeding form of his pale bride; and to thee I displayed the triple crown of flames, which shall, ere long, I trust, empale thy burning brows. My spells wrought—the hour arrived, the blow was struck."—"And yet thou sayest Paladour and Isabelle live?"—"I crushed them while they contended with my purpose; I relented when they became its victims: nor were they ever the objects, but the implements, of mine hatred: and when the youth purposed to join the

Crusaders, I shuddered to add to his imaginary guilt, the burthen of real parricide; for, had he slain Raymond of Toulouse, he would have slain his own father. And now, have I not kept my vow, and wreaked my vengeance? The Lord of Courtenaye perished in flames and torture; Raymond was punished by twenty years' privation of his child: there remains but one more victim, and that victim is—thyself!"—"Announce my doom, most potent prophetess! most sage sorceress!" cried the bishop, with a disdainful laugh.—"Thou shalt appear in the spirit before the judgment-seat, or ere to-morrow's sun be set——"—"Maniac! mendicant! witching hag!" cried the proud prelate in scorn, "whose menaces are despicable as thyself art loathsome, is it thou who darest to predict my doom?"—"Nor maniac, mendicant, nor witch," cried the female, her voice swelling to a tone of fearful power: "it is *Marie de Mortimar* who speaks thy doom, and defies her own!"

She snatched a lamp from the table as she spoke, and stood full before him. "This was the face that men thought fair, till thou didst cover it with dishonour; this was the form that was pure, till thou didst debase it! Oh!" she shrieked, "that I could thus lay bare my soul before thee, it would be the reflection of thine own—despair!"

The bishop's blood ran cold in his veins. He retreated some paces; but he tried to overcome his fear by rage. "Vision from the grave!" he exclaimed, "abhorred spectre! thus hast thou often glared in my dreams; but thou shalt haunt me no longer, waking or slumbering! Ho! Mauleon, Savari!" he shouted to his pages, stamping, "bear this hag to the dungeon!—No:" he paused; "she shall not hold intercourse with agents from earth or hell! Is there a nook in these walls where she may be kept in safety, and apart from the other prisoners?"—"So please you, my lord, there is one adjacent to this chamber."—"Doth it communicate with

any other apartment in the castle?"—"With none, reverend lord, save with the chapel, which hath been long deserted."—"Bear her thither on the instant! I will try whether the foul shape, with which that fiendish spirit is entrusted, be proof against the flames to-morrow!"

Marie de Mortemar departed without uttering a word; but she gave a glance, as she parted, that the bishop, in his pride, shrank from. He stood appalled for a moment; then issuing orders that the pile should be lit as mass was said on the morrow, he retired to rest; but not without a previous and minute inspection of the planetary heavens, now in their midnight glory. All there appeared favourable, as all on earth was calm. There was not a sound from the camp of Count Raymond or the city of Tarascon, though the moving of the glimmering lights in each told of preparation all alive.

The bishop threw himself on his bed, giving orders to the pages, who slept at his feet, to wake him before dawn. The morning broke, and preparations were making in different parts of the castle for two very different celebrations, though the cruel superstition of the age deemed them the same in religious importance and efficacy.

The chapel, long neglected, was now, like a banished favourite recalled, arrayed with all the pomp the time could allow of, by the ecclesiastics of the bishop's train, who well knew how to direct such preparation. Meanwhile, an iron stake had been fixed in the massive roof of stone with which the highest turret of the castle was covered; the prisoners, who were all Albigeois, verifying to a man the bishop's prediction of their obstinacy, and announcing their resolution to perish in the flames, rather than renounce their faith.

The obsequies of the count de Monfort, whose body, clothed in armour, with a crucifix placed in the hands, lay on a bier in the centre of the aisle, were first performed, the bishop and all the ecclesi-

astics chaunting the "*Dirige gressus meos.*" High mass was then celebrated by the bishop, with all the pomp of the Catholic ritual; and, after the distribution of the consecrated elements to the ecclesiastics, the laity approached to partake of the bread. Hundreds of armed figures (Prince Lewis and Sir Aymer alone being absent) crowded round the altar; and many a stately head and stubborn knee was bent, and many a gauntleted hand locked in earnest devotion, while the holy rites went on. In a short time a slight confusion was remarked: some who had partaken, instead of retiring to their seats in the aisle, remained, as if unable to quit the spot; some, who still knelt, seemed, after a few efforts, to quit their posture, to sink still lower; while others, who had retired a few steps, sat down in the aisle, and resting their drooping heads on their hands, appeared falling into a lethargy.

The ecclesiastic who held the patin to the bishop, plucked his robe, as if to mark these extraordinary appearances; but in doing so his countenance assumed a strange expression, and he fell speechless beside the altar. Two who attempted to raise him, continued to bend over him helplessly, as if unable to raise themselves from their incumbent posture; and a fourth, dashing the holy element he bore to the ground, and pointing to it with a look of horror, sank beside them. The symptoms every moment became more unequivocal: those who with eyes uplifted in devotion were partaking of the rite, felt them fixed; those who had clasped their hands in prayer, felt them stiffening; while loathing sickness or excruciating pain marked the different but fatal character of the malady, as it operated on different constitutions. And those who had not yet participated, believing the groans and vehement gestures of the sufferers to proceed only from the intensity of their devotion, pressed frantically on to the altar, to partake of the sacred enthusiasm the rites had inspired.

At this moment the day broke fully, and, through the many-tinted windows of the chapel, flung ghastly light on the features of the dying.

At length the terrible conviction burst on all: a cry of horror rang through the church, and the dreadful sounds of "Poison, poison! the holy elements are poisoned!" echoed on every side, and in every accent of despair and death. Through dead and dying—the convulsed, who caught his robes in their agonies, and the still conscious, who implored his benediction in vain—the Bishop of Toulouse burst his way on the first conviction; and, on reaching his apartment, applied the strongest antidotes that the skill of the age could furnish, and with which he had always the precaution to be amply provided. The very first attempts proved their total inefficacy, and the bishop felt "that he must appear in the spirit before the judgment-seat, ere that day's sun was set." His resolution did not desert him for a moment in this dreadful emergency; and, subduing all expression of the torture that already began to prey like a living fire on his vitals, he commanded his attendants instantly to bring Marie de Mortemar before him, still cherishing the belief congenial to all proud and powerful minds, that he bore "a charmed life," and that means, even supernatural, would yet interpose for its preservation. As Marie de Mortemar was led into the chamber, the triumph that sparkled in her eye, and dilated her whole form, restored to her wasted frame somewhat of the beauty by which it had once been eminently distinguished. This identity with her former self made the bishop shudder. Past crimes and horrors seemed present again, as she stood before him. "Fiend," said the bishop, raising his livid eyes—"fiend, this is thy work!"—"Mine," she answered firmly—"mine; and the last act of my life is its most glorious. This is indeed dying worthy of the cause for which alone I have groaned under the burthen of life for twenty years. But for thy foolish malice, that confined me in the

neighbourhood of the chapel, instead of remanding me to my dungeon, I had never had such ample power of vengeance: the shaft was aimed at thee, but its flight hath laid many low."—"Boast of thy crime," said the bishop, "while thou mayest; but a few moments, and thou shalt expiate it in flames."—"Better perish in flames, than live to be their fuel for ever and ever," said Marie de Mortemar. "Hag, thou liest!" cried the prelate. "I never feared man nor fiend. Wherever my disembodied spirit may wander, there it will *rule:* I shall be among the spirits of the earth's high lords—the ancient conquerors—those who, like me, conceived purposes too vast for earth, but who will realize them in other regions! If the spirit survive death, its power will survive also: I shall sit with kings."—"Thou wilt, indeed, sit with the disturbers of the earth—the defacers of God's creation!" cried Marie de Mortemar, fixing her eyes on his convulsed features; "but where are they?" "Vile hag!" cried the bishop, "I sent not for thee to ban and rave! Thou, who knowest the power of that deadly venom, knowest perhaps its antidote: disclose it, and I will exchange thy stake for a throne. I dread not death, but I would live till my sound reached to the earth's limits. Give me life, and I will reward thee beyond all thy delirious dreams of vengeance."—"Such antidote I have," she cried; "but thou shalt never taste its virtue! Oh, hope not, hope not, man of pride and power, that the earth's treasure could win that secret from me! I tell thee, were thy body formed of adamant, the drug is so potent it would expel thy spirit from it ere an hour be past."—"Seize the sorceress, and chain her to the stake!" cried the bishop of Toulouse, collapsing in mortal sickness. "I will see her burned with mine own eyes!"—"There, too, thou art baffled and deceived!" cried Marie, "thine eyes will close in agony ere a faggot can be lit, ere a flame can be raised! Hark, hark to the trumpets of Raymond of Toulouse! His catapults will shake these

walls ere the words have parted from my lips! See how fast the bands of De Foix and De Comminges pour from Tarascon, and all against this distracted castle, filled with the dying and the dead. Hark," she cried, listening to the screams of horror and agony that burst from the chapel below, "hark to thy knell. Thine enemies are around thee—thine allies in blood and crime are perishing. Chain me to the stake: burn me an ye will; but, ere I am in ashes, thou wilt be in flames." The trumpets of Count Raymond were indeed heard as she spoke; and the attendants, quitting hold of her at the sound, rushed towards a casement to ascertain the truth of what she said. Marie de Mortemar seized the moment of her release: she tore back a casement that opened on a bartizan; for a moment she stood there gazing downward—"I come, I come," she cried; then waving her arm in the direction of the chapel, from which the cries of horror and death at that moment redoubled—"Follow—follow," she cried, "follow all of you—he waits for you!" and, flinging herself from the bartizan, her body was dashed to atoms on the rocky terrace. The bishop viewed her fate with less emotion than he heard her tidings. "Look forth," he said, "look forth, and see if her intelligence be true:—a trumpet seems to ring in mine ears; but whether it be that of the enemy, or of doom, I know not—nor reck!"

The attendants looked forth, and beheld all the plain overspread with the array of Count Raymond, who led the van at full speed; while the troops of De Foix and his associate were pouring fast from the city of Tarascon, their lances gleaming in the morning sun. "They come!" cried the attendants; "and who is there to meet them?—a dying band, and a defenceless castle!"—"Am *I* not here," cried the bishop—"am I not here still? Cravens, cowards, fetch mine armour!" and he applied his hands to his robes, as if bracing on his armour. Of his four attendants, three fled as he spoke, to make des-

perate defence: one alone remained to watch the last moments of the mighty prelate, on whose associations the sound of war operated even amid the agonies of death.

"Charge! charge!" he cried; "we shall win the day yet: can we fail with such noble aid? Thou art with us, Simon de Monfort—and thou, Enguerrand de Vitry, and thou, Raymond of Toulouse, restored to the banners thou once foughtest beneath so bravely! Why comes that pale Lord of Courtenaye," he cried, his thoughts all running on the dead,—"and that strange bridegroom and his bleeding bride? Well, let them ride up: we are a gallant company. Charge! charge your lances at their throats! Hold! who is the leader that waves ye on? Ride not up that precipice! see what yawns below! He doffs his helmet. See—see his visage! Follow not his beckoning. He plunges—and we must plunge too—for ever, for ever! Dark spirit, I will grapple with thee!" He fell—and expired.

Meanwhile the castle was one wide scene of consternation, horror, and helplessness. Lambert de Limons had perished; the men-at-arms had lowered the draw-bridge to effect their escape from what they believed to be diabolical power. The fierce and rapid assault of Count Raymond gave no choice, and met no opponent: his troops in a moment deluged the castle with a tide of unresisted victory. The surviving Crusaders made good the postern with their lives, to secure the safety of Prince Lewis. The Monk of Montcalm made his way to the chapel, to shrieve the dying and say masses for the dead. Count Raymond and Paladour hasted to the turret, where the victims were already chained to the stake. Raymond stood exhausted; while Paladour, with one strong grasp, rent Amirald's chain; and would have folded his brother to his heart, had not Amirald, bursting from his arms, first struggled to break those of Genevieve.

* * * *

It was but a short space after these events, that Isabelle of Courtenaye, restored to her honours and wealth, and reunited to Paladour, was twining the dark tresses of Genevieve, whom she termed "dear lady and sister," with the wreaths of pearl that formed part of her splendid bridal array.

The espousals of Paladour and Amirald were held in the territorial Castle of Raymond of Toulouse. The Abbot of Normoutier (though the younger pair were heretical) spoke the nuptial benediction; and Sir Aymer du Chastelroi gave away Genevieve.

We pause not to describe the splendour of the bridal, nor to relate how many valiant sons and beautiful daughters sprang from those auspicious nuptials: but we must record a circumstance "more germane" to our tale—that the difference of birth and creed was never known to disturb the affection that subsisted between the high-born Lady of Courtenaye and the humble bride of Amirald.

Pierre, the pastor, lived honoured and cherished in the Count's palace, long enough to feel the little hands of Amirald's and Genevieve's offspring placed between his—and then departed in peace and hope. His body, as a heretic's, was not permitted to lie in consecrated ground: it was interred without the walls of the city of Toulouse, and a plain stone bore this inscription—"*Petrus Vallensis.*" A few months after his interment, the Monk of Montcalm, returning from a distant pilgrimage, halted near this stone: it was twilight,—and he asked a passenger to explain the characters to him. The passenger told him, that the remains of Pierre the pastor rested beneath the stone on which his staff was struck. "Then, truly," said the monk, "I will tell a bead or two, and utter a prayer for him—heretic as he was—ere I quit this spot." He knelt as he spoke, and the passenger went his way. The next morning he returned by chance, and saw the lifeless body of the

monk, bent, as if in prayer, on the tomb-stone of the pastor. With his staff he had made shift to inscribe in the dust near him, " *Anima mea, cum anima tuâ, heu multum deflende! pacem eternam consequatur;*" —thus, in his last moments, testifying his attachment to the pastor's character, if not to his creed. May those of different faiths, like them, imitate their tolerance, and embrace their example!

FINIS.